THE IMPATIENCE OF A PARSON

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THE IMPATIENCE OF A PARSON

The Impatience of a Parson

A Plea for the Recovery of Vital Christianity

BY

H. R. L. SHEPPARD

lately Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

With an introduction by

PROFESSOR E. D. SOPER,

DUKE UNIVERSITY

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Dedicated,
without permission,
to the BELOVED PEOPLE
of ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS
who, while they may not be able to agree
with what is contained in this book,
will, I think, give its author credit
for at least desiring to make
the Lord Christ more real
and His Society more humane
and effectual.

PREFACE

It had been my great hope to have put out these opinions while I was Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and I certainly should have done so but for the fact that the last two years of my time there were unfortunately spent in an obstinate attempt to regain my health and to husband what little I had for the care and service of that great parish.

I desire to emphasise the fact that the present Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, who has generously permitted me to serve on his staff, and has shown me how gracious a successor may be to his predecessor, can in no way be identified with any views that are here expressed. It would be most unfair if he, or indeed any of my late or present colleagues, were included in censure that may be passed upon me. I am solely responsible for what I have written.

A good deal that appears in the following pages has been taken out of notebooks in which, during the last fifteen years, I wrote

my own thoughts and other people's phrases. Unfortunately, since for some years I did not contemplate this book, I often failed to record the authorities for phrases I transcribed, with the result that I am unable at times to express indebtedness as I should wish to.

I am under deep obligation to my intimate friend, Hugh Johnston, for his assistance in preparing this book for the press.

H. R. L. SHEPPARD.

The Red House,
Godalming.

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"O Brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

"And Thou, O Lord, by Whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee."

"The Eternal Goodness"
(*J. G. Whittier*).

INTRODUCTION

I DO not know Mr. Sheppard and have not read anything else he has written. He is an Englishman and an Anglican and I am neither, yet in spite of these real differences there is kinship, vital spiritual kinship between us. It illustrates how arbitrary our ecclesiastical and denominational distinctions are. When earnest men, feeling that there is trouble with the Christianity of the present day, begin to probe beneath the surface, they come to the same facts. This is not strange; what seems strange to many is that their interpretations and conclusions should be so nearly alike. I put it in this way for no one should be led to think that there is any dull uniformity in the processes by which men are diagnosing and prescribing for the ailments of the Church. There is great diversity; I should not be surprised if no single person agreed with all Mr. Sheppard says. I do not—but that is not the point at all.

The significant thing is that an earnest member of the English Established Church,

with all that that means traditionally and in actual belief and practice to-day, should frankly speak out of his inmost heart the deep-lying dissatisfaction which he feels as he thinks of Christianity in his native land. He will be called all sorts of names; men will gravely consider his case and come to the conclusion that he is immature, or obsessed, or impudent, or brutally frank, that he is altogether too impatient, and what not. I do not think Mr. Sheppard is posing as a near-martyr, though he will be accused of that. No, there is another judgment which may be passed, which will strike much nearer the centre of fact, that he has put his finger down on very real difficulties, so serious that they must receive attention or untoward results may be looked for.

The author is not an unpractical idealist, but a work-a-day man, a parson who for fifteen years has been a vicar in one of London's great parishes, coming into almost daily contact with life at its best and worst, and able to study and mull over the fortunes of organised Christianity as he has seen it in one of its great typical centres. He has not been highly impressed with Christianity as an effi-

cient means of touching the life of a great urban area. I cannot but quote, " His Spirit [the Spirit of our Lord] is directly opposed to the characteristic vice of modern Christianity—insipidity." Again, he compares Christianity as it once was and ought now to be, " a torch going before the human race in its march through history," with what he is compelled reluctantly to acknowledge it now is, " an ambulance in the rear, whose main function is to pick up the wounded." What he wants is " a disturbance within Christianity. Frankly," he says, " I want almost anything rather than an unchallenged continuation of these smothered authorised versions of the fire which Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth." This is very vigorous language, and there is more of it, but who that is not blind can but say that it wakes him up and points toward what, with greater or less distinctness, he has often seen for himself and wishes he could change?

I do not know how anyone can gainsay the fundamental propositions which are laid down. They are two in number. First, that the Church should not be found on a lower level corporately than its members would feel

it right for them to occupy as individuals, and second, that, while the Church is essential, it is not primary, but must always be "subsidiary to the adventure in Christian living."

Much that Mr. Sheppard says sounds very revolutionary, and doubtless it is from the standpoint of strict Churchmanship, but from that of New Testament Christianity it is not revolutionary at all. That at least is not the impression which the book has made upon me. The author says in one place that what he wants is "not a new definition of religion, but a new realisation of it." The whole tenor of the book indicates that he is far more likely to run into difficulties in his own communion than out of it. He is committed to intercommunion between the churches and is not held by any strict interpretation of the Apostolic Succession. The Episcopal form of church government meets his approval, but this is not true of Apostolic Succession when it is made "the essential test of the validity of a Christian Church." This is of course anathema to Anglo-Catholics and even High Churchmen; it might even make many Low Churchmen wince. As one who belongs to a

" Free Church," the present writer cannot see how any sort of unity, even the " unity in diversity " of which we hear so much, can be achieved except on the basis proposed in this volume. I say this seems perfectly clear to him and to his fellow churchmen in the Protestant denominations, but there is no point at which our Anglican friends feel so deeply. They believe they would be surrendering something essential and that the very heart of our religion would be in danger of being sacrificed should such a thought be seriously entertained. The issue is a real one. Mr. Sheppard grasps it without fear and states his conclusion without equivocation. To us on the outside it is very significant that such a pronouncement should come out of the heart of orthodox Anglicism.

For our author is essentially orthodox even though in his independence he makes certain bold statements which will be stoutly challenged. What he begs us to remember is that he is not attempting something final, but expects much modification of his statements. It would in fact not be hard to pick the volume to pieces, but when it had been done the central challenge it contains still stands. It

is not dependent on the judgment passed on this proposal or that concerning the doctrines of our common faith. He gives ample evidence that he is an humble and devoted follower of Jesus Christ with all that that implies, and that the main drive of his argument is sound to the core. There is something the matter with Christianity to-day, yet Christianity is altogether indispensable if civilisation is not to be destroyed. What he asks for may be put in his own words, " I am not so much pleading here for uniformity of thought and worship as for a number of Churches welcoming, supplementing, and rejoicing in one another, and for a mutual toleration of divergent uses within the fellowship of one universal Society whose business is to confront Antichrist. My plea is not for the end of differences between Christians, but only for the recognition of their secondary importance." He would have the Church saved from the very sins which it condemns in a divided, jealous, suspicious world; only then can it essay to offer salvation to a world which is not at the present time impressed with the Church's sincerity and the unselfishness of its motives.

He has his eye especially on the Church of England and on the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops which will meet in 1930. He feels that the proposals of the last Lambeth Conference, that of 1920, looked in the right direction, but failed to reach their logical goal. There still remains a barrier to Church union which he believes the Anglican Church can do much to remove. In fact that Church is the only one which can take the necessary step in setting aside the present obstacles in the way of full intercommunion. It will be a serious operation, but what of it? Mr. Sheppard thinks that "maybe it is time that the Churches, following the example of their Master, should die for the people; they have lived for themselves too long." He is not very optimistic, and says so frankly. The bishops and even the archbishops are not the leaders needed. Speaking of the men who have occupied the highest ecclesiastical position in the gift of the English nation, he says that they have been "Referees" rather than "Reformers," and it is the Reformer type which is greatly needed at this time.

The whole volume is a splendid example of "The truth spoken in love," the truth as

the author sees it, spoken in the sincerity of love which no one can doubt. In England it is finding its place there as a real "Tract for the Times"; and all that I can say is that it will quicken the religious pulse and stir the conscience of those on this side of the water who read it, no matter to what denomination they belong.

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CHAPTER I

DISCONTENT

FOR fifteen years now, I have been growing increasingly disturbed at the condition of Institutional Religion, but except for occasional outbursts from the pulpit of St. Martin-in-the-Fields I have held my peace; for while I thought I knew what was wrong, I did not know how it could be remedied. There is nothing easier than to find fault with the Churches, but the gain to truth by the mere announcement of a famine is not considerable. It so happens that for the last three years circumstances which have compelled me to relinquish active work have given me opportunity for thought and study, which the ceaseless round of parochial cares necessarily denied. I have spent that time in one long attempt to make my criticisms constructive, and to think how those things that seem amiss and even deplorable in organised Christianity, and especially the paralysing unreality of much of its presentation, might conceivably

be remedied. I think I can see the way round a number of corners that once defeated me. I am compelled, with the greatest reluctance, to believe that the Churches have corporately so misunderstood the message of their Founder, and so mishandled and mislaid His values—the values of his Father-God—that what survives and does duty nowadays, through the Churches, as Christianity is a caricature of what Christ intended. The Churches need much more than patch-work repair.

There must needs be a Christian Society founded on the revelation of Jesus Christ; but if that Society is to be according to the mind of Christ, I fancy it will have to be so wholly different in breadth and outlook from any Church that exists to-day, as to be scarcely recognisable as belonging to the family of Churches as we now know them. An immense revolution is inevitable if the common people are again to hear Christ gladly.

I am convinced that the world is looking for a fresher, truer and larger version of the religion of Jesus Christ, and that it is justified in requiring it. Those who come back from foreign parts tell us that the peoples of the

East are wanting Christ, but that they have no desire for Church systems. We accept their opinion but fail to realise that this attitude is also typical of the West. Men, to-day, are not looking for a religious system and yet the soul of the world, consciously or unconsciously, is crying for the Christ. This does not mean that the world of our day is ready to accept Christianity. I am under no delusion that it can be made acceptable to all. Originally, when it was perfectly presented, "many went back and walked no more with him." I have no faith in the existence of that great crowd which some genial optimists encourage us to believe is only waiting to give its enthusiasm to Christianity until certain ecclesiastical reforms have been brought about.

If the Churches to-morrow were to become out-and-out Christian and if all their ministers were to prophesy—that is, to speak the flaming Word of God in the hearing of the people—it is more than likely that places of worship would be emptier than they are to-day, and it is certain that a goodly number of the prophets would be stoned. We do not like prophets until they are dead, and even

then while we commemorate them in stone and stereotype their message for all time in a form which they themselves would especially deprecate, we should be gravely disturbed if—as Mr. Bernard Shaw reminds us in his inspired "St. Joan"—they contemplated returning to continue their tiresome habit of saying uncomfortable things.

I do not know, and it is not my business to know, what response would ensue if Christianity were set out before men in all its original freshness. God alone knows what the answer would be. This however I do know, there would no longer be any opposition to it arising from the finer elements in human nature which, at the moment, is so distressing a factor in the world's attitude towards organic Christianity. That would be immensely to the good.

The truth is that Christendom refuses to take Jesus Christ seriously. It is devoted to Him, but it does not know what to do with Him and it does not believe that a religion founded upon His Father-God and His standards could meet the practical demands of this very complicated world. It is not thought possible for a religion to prevail

which refuses to arm itself with the weapons that this world both advocates and uses. Christendom has acted and is acting as if Jesus Christ had given in to the use of magic, force and superstitious fear, which, as a matter of fact, in His Temptation He definitely rejected as being incompatible with His Kingdom of God. Over-critical as it may sound, I am forced to believe that Christendom to-day is profoundly ignorant of the very essentials of its faith: Christian people do not yet know to what their faith commits them. The Christianity of the Churches has become an immensely complicated affair and, in consequence, men escape gladly or sorrowfully from its appeal. A new and very real sacrifice on the part of every Church will be needed before the full Gospel can be preached to this generation.

The sense of urgency under which I have written has, I fear, caused me to be less than generous and possibly less than just in acknowledging the inestimable service that Institutional Religion has rendered and is rendering to humanity at large and to individuals in particular. One thing I may be permitted to say on behalf of myself: I have

made no suggestion in this book that would take away from any single soul any Church privilege which, at the moment, he values and esteems: my concern has been rather to suggest how those privileges may become more generally available.

In spite of appearances, I am not really unmindful of how impoverished would have been our world had it not been for the age-long witness of organic Christianity to many of the things that belong to Jesus Christ, nor am I unconscious of how much that is beautiful, gracious, romantic and true in life to-day would cease to be if the Churches refrained from their ministrations and active beneficence.

There is indeed a sense in which the Church—"the whole congregation of faithful people dispersed throughout the world," to use the charitable definition in the Bidding Prayer—may yet be spoken of as it was many years ago by the author of "Ecce Homo" (a book that still abundantly repays attention), as "the moral university of the world, not merely the greatest but the only great school of virtue existing."

For any injustice of which I am guilty or

appear to be guilty I sincerely apologise, and yet I plead that there is some excuse for counting it scarcely worth while to pause to praise at length what is good now in Institutional Religion since it is so obviously and so disastrously not nearly good enough. I feel that Western civilisation will go up in the smoke of another World War long before Christianity, moving at its present pace, takes possession: it is horrible to think that some who read these pages may themselves be the victims of the next war. As I see things, it is a close race now between Christianity and Catastrophe, and the issue will be decided within the lifetime of many of my readers. I am haunted by the vision of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ has within its power to do for a world heading for disaster; while, in depressing contrast, I am sensitive to the spectacle of what it is actually achieving with its number of mutually isolated if not antagonistic Churches, entrenched against each other and each offering but a partial version of the saving wisdom of Christ.

It seems to me impertinent to suggest that the conscious or unconscious need of mankind for all that our Lord amply and generously

desires to supply is to be answered effectively by the offer to men of one or another of these imperfect editions. He who feels passionately on the subject and writes about it may perhaps be pardoned if he decides to dispense with the counsel consistently recommended to reformers, that it is more politic and less liable to antagonise, if criticism even of a constructive character be prefaced by saying how splendid everything is at the moment and always has been.

I have endeavoured to write without undue confidence, for indeed "I count not myself yet to have apprehended," and yet I have, so to speak, laid all my cards on the table. Doubtless many will deplore the weakness of my hand, counting an unreasonable impatience its only long suit. It is true that I do not hesitate to express and counsel impatience, but I cannot allow that it is unreasonable and I am convinced that it is timely.

Some years ago a distinguished head master, now a Bishop, wrote a prayer for a new Movement in the Church of England in which a petition was made—thought by some a little dangerous—that the members of the Movement might know when by impatience

(as well as by patience) they might serve best. It was a perfectly reasonable and a highly desirable request, yet seeing how frequently and consistently Authority approves the virtue of patience and censures the impatience of those few " Sons of Thunder " who still remain to organised Christianity, it is scarcely to be suspected that there may be times and seasons when impatience may also be a virtue. Indeed, the distrust and fear of impatience has become an obsession with those who direct the Churches and admonish gatherings of the faithful: the phrase " more haste less speed " has so gotten into our blood that the slower and more gradual a process the more surely we think it divine. The disaster of this excuse lies in the fact that there is no depth of failure that may not be condoned by calling it to our aid. Progressive reform and no earthquakes is that to which even the bolder spirits in ecclesiastical affairs incline.

The Churches will never earn the right to possess the hearts of the people until to attain a noble objective they make, and gladly make, hazardous acts of faith and sacrifice.

We need to develop what has been called the faculty of acted promptitude and to re-

duce the inordinate length of time during which we remain *in statu quo* while we weigh the pros and cons, what we call "exploring the situation": it would be more Christian and effective to act as if the "situation" had never arisen. The fever from which the patient is suffering does not abate because the consulting physicians are discussing the case: death may ensue during the process.

I have become convinced that it is the duty of those who have come to think as I do, no longer to exercise patience, but to speak out, not indeed with a blast of defiance or flippancy, but in a humble endeavour to assist where one may. This obligation is not to be denied even to the lowliest working partner in a great concern. Christianity badly needs rash men who will not flinch from the crispness of religion, nor fear the result of stirring up wasps' nests.

There are times in history when decisive and courageous action is the only safe course to pursue; when it is high time that what is said to be desirable but impossible should be done, and done without delay. I am convinced that such a time for Christianity has

arrived; that is, if it is to have any hand in persuading humanity to try the better way—God's royal road of love. There is nothing more dangerous than to avoid danger: nothing so annihilating as timidity. There is such persistent and, as I think, unwarranted patience displayed even by those who sincerely desire reform that I cannot believe there is need for one individual to apologise for a show of impatience for which indeed he is unblushingly impenitent.

Why need we be patient if we believe the Holy Spirit presses on the hearts of men? We live in the dispensation of the Spirit, but it is scarcely to be believed, for, though we invoke Him constantly, we consistently ignore His arrival, at least if He bids us forget our unchristian values and denominational loyalties. We prefer to sing the "Veni Creator" yet again, as if we hoped He might come next time with less compromising demands.

No doubt I shall be reminded, that I raise more questions than I answer but I want questions raised, the more fundamental the better, and I truly believe that it may be the destiny of the Church of England to answer

them. I desire to be provocative in the sense that I should like what I have written to provoke the wise and experienced to reply.

I maintain that what is here said represents not only what is in the mind of countless thoughtful people both within and without the Churches, but that what is here proposed follows as the practical outcome of the intellectual position which has been reached to-day by many—indeed by most—of the greatest Christian thinkers. Mine is but an attempt to translate into practical politics the conclusions which they have arrived at in their studies. Since, as I have already said, what I have written is the result of a process of thinking which has extended over years, I hope that I may be excused from being told that a recent illness has seriously warped my judgment and that with returning health doubtless there will also return a greater sanity and a truer perspective. This would be genial but untrue.

In the late war a similar method of kindly criticism was found in certain quarters at home to be the most satisfactory way of dealing with the "dangerous" views of certain Chaplains to the Forces, who in those days

spoke passionate words about organised Christianity which were not comfortable hearing for Authority. Those were times when a delightful and amiable anarchy in matters of religion fell upon the battle front, causing many Chaplains to forget for the moment to which denomination they belonged: alas, that the phase passed so soon! It was found much more convenient and much less embarrassing at home to treat those Chaplains as patients suffering from over-strain and shell-shock rather than as prophets suffering from vision.

Not for one instant do I suggest that my opinions and suggestions should prevail, but I think they should be considered. If what is here advanced is of the truth, encouragement is sought; if false, correction. When by general consent things are not what they might be or what they were intended to be, discontent and the frank expression of concern do not seem to me disloyal though they always appear as treasonable to the contented.

Some who may agree with much that is here advanced will consider that it comes but ill from the pen of an accredited minister of religion who has accepted the emoluments of a Church which he desires to see radically

altered, though I should prefer the word enlarged. When unpalatable truths are spoken, those who cannot deny them are wont to say that those who expressed them were not the people to have done so. I do not count my views disloyal to the Church of Christ as I conceive it in the mind of God, but I am well aware that others will differ from my judgment. I am in the hands of Authority. If those set over me are of the opinion that my conclusions are not consistent with the exercise of a ministry within the Church of England, I should feel obliged, however sorrowfully, to bow to their ruling. I should never leave the Church of my own volition since I love it terribly—it worries the life out of me because it is so well worth worrying about—but I could not reconcile my conscience with continuing a ministry thought by lawful authority to be disloyal, nor with the acceptance of a stipend from a Church in which one was deemed to be unprofitable.

Yet I would end with a caution which, with whatever ill success, I have endeavoured myself to bear in mind. We who desire radical reform are not called upon to be contemptuous or irreverent to the past, or to under-

estimate the accumulated wisdom of the centuries. "Modern knowledge," says Canon Oliver Quick, "may compel us to abandon—not without regret—beliefs that were dear to the forefathers of the faith. But before we allow ourselves to part with any legacy which they have bequeathed to us, we must make sure that we appreciate the full value of our heritage." There is a worship of the present no less dangerous than the worship of the past.

If our second duty to the past is to forget it, our first duty is to bear it well in mind. "Each great regenerator and revealer of reality," writes Bishop Gore, "each God-intoxicated soul achieving transcendence owes something to his predecessors and contemporaries. All great spiritual achievement, like all great artistic achievement, however spontaneous it may seem to be, however much the fruit of a personal love and vision, is firmly rooted in the racial past. It fulfils rather than destroys, and unless its true movement towards novelty and fresh levels of pure experience be then balanced by the stability which is given to us by our hoarded traditions and formed habits, it will degenerate into eccentricity and fail of its full effect.

Although nothing but first-hand discovery of a response to spiritual values is in the end of any use to us, that discovery and that response are never quite such single-handed affairs as we like to suppose."

During the war an archbishop was seen in a front-line trench in gaiters and a tin hat. Canon Guy Rogers has remarked on the encouragement that could be derived from his Grace's appearance since while his legs were firmly rooted in the past, his head was moving with the times. Of such is the spirit of the true reformer.

CHAPTER II

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

BEFORE giving an outline of what is contained and proposed in this book, I am anxious to emphasise with all the force at my command two conclusions at which I have arrived, both of which seem to me of paramount importance. Firstly, I do not believe that a Church can be Christian, Christ-like, if it be publicly expressing or upholding judgments, values and traditions—however hallowed by custom—that in doing violence to the spirit of love, unity and peace are alien to the mind of Christ; or which the conscience of an individual, who was endeavouring to live his life so that Jesus Christ could approve it, would repudiate for himself as being less than Christian. In a sentence, *a Church may not be corporately less Christian than the Christian individual.* At the moment there is a grave contrast between the piety of many an individual Christian and the corporate impiety of the Churches.

And secondly, while I recognise the abso-

lute necessity for the Christian Society, I believe that its main purpose and function is to serve and encourage those who have determined within their own souls to dare the Way of Christ, and have started or are starting on that venture. *The Church, however essential, is subsidiary to the adventure of Christian living*—just as to our Lord the Church of His day was subsidiary to the Kingdom of God, that condition of living in which Love prevails. Jesus Christ seemed to want men to find God independently of conventional aids.

The path that leads into the religious haven where we would be, as Dr. Burroughs has said, "is not the path of tradition or authority, but that of enterprising obedience to what the Spirit says in the depths of our surrendered personality." I should wish to hear men and women asked to attempt to live in the Spirit of Christ and then advised to join themselves to the Institution, provided that it can keep them true, loyal and disciplined in the service of God and their fellow men, and in charity with all other Christians. I regret the usual orthodox appeal which at least seems to suggest that churchmanship and all that is entailed thereby is the first essential

for those who would be Christians. Men should be asked first to attempt an adventure rather than to accept an orthodoxy.

I believe that nearly all the troubles of Institutional Religion arise from past and present neglect of these, to me, obvious truths, and that they are responsible both for the fact that the Churches are preaching less than the full Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that the Institution has been given a priority and a pride of place to which it has no right and for which it has no authority. No man can follow two masters, and there are times when it is impossible to be loyal to Christ and the Church. Surely there is no doubt, then, where loyalty should be given. The Son of Man is Lord even of the Church.

Let me now set out the argument that will be pursued in these pages. I shall begin by touching upon what is called the World Crisis, and my passionate belief that by general consent there never was a moment in history more urgently in need of the saving power of a large and fearless religion. A great philosopher has recently written that "no great civilisation has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith." I am positive

that our present civilisation cannot stay the course for long without it. Without a fresh access of moral power we shall soon be undone.

In response to this urgent need, I shall suggest that no religion will suffice, or indeed is required for the satisfaction of man's spiritual hunger or the salvation of his world, save the religion of Jesus Christ. One thing, however, is certain: muffled, partial, exclusive and attenuated editions of that religion, such as do duty now for original Christianity, will not meet the case or the need. There is nothing to be said for reduced Christianity.

If the Christian faith be superbly relevant to the actual needs of hard-pressed people, why is the fact not widely known and advertised, and the offer gratefully and gladly accepted? It is here that I shall be compelled to join issue with the religion of the Churches as they now function since I cannot perceive that they are really preaching or practising Christianity or offering it to mankind. The world's literal need of salvation is not to be satisfied by summonses to denominational loyalties and devotional exercises any more than by a religion of pious sentimentality with its

lavish references to 'gentle' and 'sweet.' "At the moment," says Professor Barry, "the Churches are mainly devotional societies." Where the trumpet is expected, the flute will not suffice; and the flute, I fear, is the predominant instrument to-day in the orchestra of Institutional Religion. As things are Christianity is not given a chance: the Churches seem to have no courage for the fray. Frankly, I desire to see the values of organised Christianity turned upside down, believing they are now very largely wrong side up.

Yet, a Church of some sort is necessary not only because Jesus Christ seemed to take one for granted, but because He appeared to wish His followers to be associated together in a fellowship. "There is nothing," writes Bishop Gore, "more central to the mind of Christ than that you can only love God in fellowship." Moreover, group organisation is a necessity for mankind, and the spiritual needs of the majority will not be catered for without a society, through which men may express their ideals, and from which they may obtain that which they require to keep them strong and steadfast in the way. As

long as man is man Churches will be needed for all that moral and spiritual re-enforcement which common life and aims and example and worship and symbolism can give. Mr. Bernard Shaw cannot be quoted as an enthusiast for the Churches as they exist to-day but, in an article in the *St. Martin's Review,* he suggested that if the people found themselves deprived of churches they would find that they had been deprived of a necessity of life, and the want would have to be supplied and there would probably be more churches and fuller ones. In justice to Mr. Shaw, I should add that in the article to which I refer he advised the closing down of our present churches in the belief that as an inevitable consequence better ones would take their place.

Certainly the Christian Institution is essential.

This leads us to the crucial question of the kind of Church which would be acceptable to the Founder of Christianity, and in this connection I shall declare my belief that no Church can be actually Christian that corporately expresses values which differ from the outstanding values of Christ, and which

would be repudiated by an individual disciple for his own life and practice as being less than Christlike. Obvious and fundamental as this axiom may appear, it is not one which the Churches have attended to in the past; nor are they likely to attend to it in the future without a drastic change of heart and *moral* on the part of the rank and file, as well as the ecclesiastically minded who compose and largely control them. The Churches are not societies for the preservation of ancient opinions, but for the furtherance of living religion; they must make and not merely record history.

My contention is that the task now awaiting every Church which will not brook delay is to put itself corporately and ruthlessly under the tuition of Jesus Christ in an atmosphere of unlimited candour, that it may correct its values where they have gone astray, simplify its message where it has become immensely complicated, purify its life and witness where it has suffered from contact with the kingdoms of this world, and dissociate itself from the spirit of exclusiveness and from privileges which separate it from other Churches, and render it incomprehensible to

and aloof from ordinary people who have nothing but admiration for the religion of Christ as they find it in His life. This will be no light undertaking. The sharing of the mind of Christ will be almost as difficult as rebirth itself for Churches rooted in history and sometimes in those fables that are called history * (I am not afraid of history but I *am* afraid of historians!)—steeped in tradition, jealous of prestige, tenacious of their status, confident in the finality of their creeds, anxious for pre-eminence. "To covet the truth is a very distinguished passion," says Santayana. A world of vested interests is not one which welcomes the disruptive forces of candour, but unless the Churches will consent at least to reconsider their values, judgments and traditions under a new baptism of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Christendom cannot be renewed; if they will, then surprising and wonderful things will happen, the results of which no man can now foretell. At the moment Christianity is heavily weighted with ancestral blunders.

* There is a depth of truth in Mark Twain's delightful saying, "I had a splendid education, but the worst of it is that so much of it wasn't so."

I cannot believe that Institutional Religion can be vitalised and made effective for the great task that still awaits it unless individuals who belong to the Churches, beginning with the clergy and ministers (for the rank and file are not to be expected to be in advance of their professional teachers) now determine to take Jesus Christ seriously and at His Word, and insist that their particular Church should do likewise.

The problem of the Churches is primarily the problem of whether the *moral* of their members can be renewed and heightened sufficiently to compel them first to understand and then to accept for themselves the unedited teaching of Jesus Christ, and later to lay it without compromise upon the conscience of their Christian Church, insisting that its corporate values and judgments should be such as would do no violence to the Father-God of Jesus Christ's revealing. It is no new definition of religion that is needed, but a new realisation of it. A new vision of Christianity is infinitely more important than any concrete business operation on the part of ecclesiastical reformers. Vital religious revivals are not concerned with changing men from

unbelief to belief, but from mere belief to realisation. The early Christians had no creeds and little ritual, but a mighty realisation.

The first duty now for those of us who profess and call ourselves Christians and Church people is to re-think our religion in terms of Jesus Christ. It is not very difficult to do this, but to accept the conclusions of that process of re-thought and to stand for them is a task warranted to tax every ounce of moral courage that a man may possess. Yet whenever in history Christianity has vitally come to itself, the movement has been associated with somebody's rediscovery of Jesus Christ. Dr. Fosdick writes: "All the vital reformations in the Christian Church have had one common element; the religion of Jesus has pushed its way up through the obscurities and formalities of an accumulated religion concerning Him, and has taken once more the centre of the scene." Dr. Fosdick pleads further for "the religion of Jesus as distinguished from the religion about Jesus."

Bishop Gore has said: "I always get a slight shiver when I read in modern books about Christianity being essentially Christo-

centric." It seems a terrible thing to say unless Bishop Gore * really believes that those of us who pray for it have failed to recognise in Jesus Christ the voice and portrait of the Invisible God.

It is far easier to accept the dogmas of Christianity than its ethics and, if proof be needed, let it be remembered that that is exactly what Christendom has done for the last nineteen hundred years. We need a great deal more moral and a good deal less theological sensitiveness.

I shall next endeavour to suggest what Christian discipleship entails in the individual, and to that end I shall enumerate a few of the outstanding values of Jesus Christ which seem to me too plain for man's disputing. I shall challenge Institutional Christianity either to acclaim them as inevitable for its own corporate life and witness, or to renounce its claim to be Christian. I cannot see any middle course.

In this book, I am primarily concerned with

* However distasteful it may be to be in opposition to so good and learned a man as Bishop Gore, I am sure that the time has arrived when we must refrain from believing that his every dictum must necessarily remain unquestioned.

the Anglican Communion, and especially with that branch of it which is established in England, and to which I belong, but I fancy that much that is said will apply equally to each and every Church. In matters of apostasy I do not think there is a great deal to choose between this or that organised expression of Christianity: all have gravely fallen short and it ill behoves any branch of the Christian Church to cast stones at another.

I am not concerned as to whether the Great Church that is yet to be will commend itself to ordinary people: it may be that if it materialised, its teaching would be decisively rejected. My concern is that that Church should arise, wholly Christian in its outlook and values, divorced from false nationalism, over-emphasis on intellectualism and that love of position and prestige which, at the moment, is in the blood of every Church. We are challenged to a deep and unrelenting detestation of unchristian and partial values that so deeply curse our Churches. We must pray and work for the dawn of Christ's ampler day.

What I propose may be looked upon as absurdly idealistic and unpractical, but I shall endeavour to bring my vision into the region

of practical politics by suggesting how the Anglican Communion itself, if it would but now prepare its mind and its heart for great and courageous action and sacrifice when its leaders next meet together at what is called the Lambeth Conference * in 1930, could make suggestions which I verily believe could bring the Great Church within the horizon of those who are looking for the signs of its coming and are longing to welcome and acclaim it. I believe it might be the destiny of my Church to outline and even to lay the foundations of that Great Church.

I am well aware that the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference are not binding upon anyone, but they have great influence on Christendom and might have much more if they were more vitally Christian and sacrificial. If the Anglican leaders dared to make immense proposals and to pledge their sincerity by asking their Communion for great sacrifice, I believe there might follow a day of infinitely nobler Christian achievement

* At intervals of ten years the Bishops of the Anglican Communion throughout the world meet at Lambeth for Conference, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

and a coming together of Christendom such as, at the moment, is unthinkable.

My proposals do not permit or require revolutionary action or unconstitutional procedure on the part of us lesser people; that may be necessary later, but the time is not yet and will not be unless the leaders of Anglicanism show themselves incapable of forceful leadership. I have come to believe that my Communion in virtue both of its intellectual position and the privileges accorded to it has a vast contribution to make towards the recovery and renewal of Christendom. The Church of Rome no doubt has as great or greater opportunities still, but I fear that nothing in the nature of sacrifice or charity towards other expressions of Christianity may be expected as yet from that quarter. In the course of his speech at the opening of the Eastern-Liturgical week at Westminster in November, 1926, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster is reported to have used the following words: "To Anglicans who would ask us to join in Morning Prayer or Evensong, we have but one answer to make—that of the blessed martyr, Margaret Clitherow, 'I will not pray with you, nor shall you pray with

me; neither would I say Amen to your prayers, nor shall you say it to mine.'" Comment would be uncharitable. The Church of Rome (still, as Hobbes called it, "the ghost of the Roman Empire") waits for its Curia to be as converted to Christianity as are countless Roman Catholics who are gravely disturbed at the condition and exorbitant claims of their Communion. The Roman Church with all its merit is not and cannot be the chosen home of free men and women. Its charm and attraction to many is not that it satisfies reason, but that it astounds it. I am at a loss to understand the attitude of those who would bid us hold our hand from charity and well-doing lest we should antagonise the Roman Communion.

It is not conceivable that the call of God could sound more clearly for the Anglican Communion than it does to-day to prepare its heart and mind for 1930. Our hopes may well be set upon the next Lambeth Conference.

But the way back and up to Christ is only to be realised by the kind of unstinted sacrifice that does not count the cost or ask anything in return. The religion of our Lord

does not lend itself to those compromises and nice adjustments without which nothing can be done in politics. "Christian reconciliation," says Dr. Orchard, "does not mean gathering around the table for a nice comfortable talk in order that a way of compromise may be found; Christian reconciliation is not a mere soother of irritated feelings; it is not an ingenious compromise; it is something that has to be secured by sacrifice, and the sacrifice has to be first set forth by the superior party and then followed by others."

The position and possessions of the Anglican Communion give it some right to lead the way, at least in sacrifice. "From him to whom much is given, much shall be expected," is as applicable to a Church as to an individual. It is strange that while we are recognising that principle increasingly in the sphere of international affairs and economics, we still neglect it in the realm of those things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. Most thoughtful people are agreed that the world cannot attain to harmony and good will until every nation and class, beginning with the best endowed, has made its sacrifice for the good of the whole. Self-renunciation all

round is generally accepted now as the only condition that can bring peace to a distracted world. The leaders of the Churches in their endeavours to promote international friendship are wont to sign declarations to this effect, but the declarations will remain singularly unconvincing until the vital truth which they proclaim is recognised as equally applicable for the peace and progress of Christendom.

My prayer for my own Communion is that its leaders and its rank and file may come to realise, by a heightened *moral* which follows from an increased sensitiveness to the Will of God through constant communication with the Lord Christ, how imperative it now is that the Anglican Communion should be set upon the road of sacrifice as well as of simplification, and thereby desire and determine to jettison a whole mass of values which cannot, in the presence of Jesus Christ, be tolerated as Christian and which prevent it contributing its full offering to the Great Church that is yet to be.

The Anglican Communion must imitate its Lord's prodigality of sacrifice: no Church can be reborn save by the cross of many

wounds. The ideal type of organisation for a religion like Christianity would be one which was entirely indifferent to its own fortunes *as an institution* and prepared at any moment, like its Lord, to die for principles.

Greatly daring, I shall suggest the outline of the gift and sacrifice which I pray the Anglican Communion may be willing to make, and in order that my readers may at least have concrete and constructive proposals for their consideration, I shall submit a series of suggested Resolutions which at least embody the spirit that I long to see in evidence at the Lambeth Conference in 1930. I recognise that as the suggestions stand they will have but little, if any, support at present at the hand of either Authority or Church people at large, but I am bold enough—impertinent enough if you will—to believe that if in the intervening years between now and 1930, with or without the assistance of some Movement,* the members of my own Communion would put themselves to school afresh

* Much as I dislike Movements with their inevitable big meetings, I cannot see how Church people at large are in any other way to be encouraged to press for radical reform.

in the mind of Jesus Christ and consider well the parlous condition of Institutional Religion they would welcome Resolutions of similar moment and sacrifice—not as a counsel of despair but of great and glorious promise.

There is one further problem of vital importance that must engage the attention of those who have high hopes for the next Lambeth Conference. Obviously the Resolutions of the Anglican Fathers-in-God, which in themselves have no binding power upon Church people at large, will require behind them the driving force and intellectual energy of some great and trusted leader if they are to be made acceptable and effectual. The subject of the leadership of the Anglican Communion is a delicate one, but it cannot be shirked. If reform is to come from above the See of Canterbury will need someone with a different conception of that high office than that which the present great Archbishop (for whom my admiration and devotion are literally unbounded) and his immediate predecessors have held. I am not concerned to criticise that conception for earlier days, but I do suggest that the time is ripe now for an entirely different policy and for a leader

with the gifts of a great reformer rather than the graces of a great referee.

Indeed we need a religious genius, and I have little doubt but that he is at hand had we vision to see him. It is worth while to remember the words in which Marshal Foch made his report before he won the first battle of the Marne: "My centre is giving, my left wing is retreating; the situation is excellent. I am attacking." Of those words Colonel Buchan has written: "That was not bravado; it was a calm and considered opinion which could not be defended by any logical argument; it was genius." I am not fond of military analogies for the things of the Spirit, but these words seem to me to be prophetic of what the great religious leader would say to-day.

Many years ago, James Bryce wrote as follows about the needful qualifications for the Primate of all England: "By the time of Queen Victoria the possession of piety and gifts of speech had become more important qualifications, but the main thing was tactful moderation. . . . The position which the Archbishop of Canterbury holds as the rep-

resentative in Parliament of the whole established Church makes statesmanship the most important of all qualifications. Learning, energy, eloquence, piety would none of them, nor all of them together, make up for the want of calmness and wisdom." Does anyone but the most unblushing Erastian believe that this is what these days require? The old diplomacy has been tried and found wanting in Church and State alike. After all, Pentecost is normal Christianity, and a Church that does everything in "minuet time" is subnormal and anæmic. The ecclesiastical moderator is not adequate nowadays; a constructive revolutionary might be. When the great leader comes to Anglicanism, pandemonium will surely endure for a night, but the morning will be full of promise though he and we may not live to see it. But of this later.

I shall conclude this book with a plea that my own and every Christian Church may discover speedily from Christ Himself, not what they may gain for their own aggrandisement, but what they may give, not counting the cost, out of their treasury for that renewal and recovery of vital Christianity which is long

overdue and for which the world waits in the shadows. Only by going out, not knowing whither they go, can the Churches serve God and mankind. I pray that the Anglican Communion may be in the van of that pilgrimage.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY OR CATASTROPHE

THE great days of religion are those in which it is seen to be indispensable. I believe that such days have arrived and that there never was a moment in history when mankind more fully recognised its need of the saving power of a great and charitable religion. Most people now are willing to confess that a religion of some sort is essential, and it is a significant fact that few public men have any chance of really influencing the masses unless at heart their appeal be spiritual. If anyone has anything better than Christianity to propose, let him shout it from the housetops. He will certainly be listened to.

We do not hesitate to confess that the times are out of joint and the weapons we forged for our safety are broken in our hand. There is considerable confusion in the minds of those who were once our trusted counsellors; the ring of confidence is lacking in their speech. The situation is the more difficult since stern

reality has forced us to give up our mid-Victorian belief in an automatic progress towards perfection; as a matter of fact, it gave us up in August of 1914, and we have not yet recovered from the shock. We have been obliged in recent years, as Dr. Fosdick has reminded us, to contemplate the bankruptcy of an age which had some right to consider itself the most humanely progressive, the most enlightened and the most secure in all history. We have been reminded lately that during recent years twenty-four thrones have been overthrown, including those of the greatest land Empires of the world. During those years we have seen the worst war that has ever taken place, costing over ten million lives; we have experienced the worst famine the world has hitherto known; and the worst pestilence known to man, taking a larger toll of life than the war itself. For the benefit of those who have forgotten the horrors and crimes of the late war, which so grievously stained the reputation of our boasted civilisation and wellnigh cast it into the abyss, let me quote from "The World Crisis," by Mr. Winston Churchill:

"All the horrors of all the ages were

brought together, and not only armies, but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them. . . . Every outrage against humanity or international law was repaid by reprisals, often on a greater scale and of longer duration. No truce or parley mitigated the strife of the armies. The wounded died between the lines; the dead mouldered into the soil. Merchant ships and neutral ships and hospital ships were sunk on the seas, and all on board left to their fate or killed as they swam. Every effort was made to starve whole populations into submission without regard to age or sex. Cities and monuments were smashed by artillery; bombs from the air were cast down indiscriminately; poison gas in many forms stifled or scarred the soldiers; liquid fire was projected upon their bodies; men fell from the air in flames or were smothered, often slowly, in the dark recesses of the sea. . . . When all was over torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilised scientific Christian states had been able to deny themselves, and they were of doubtful utility."

Mr. Winston Churchill is no sentimentalist, and now, when youth is again being

taught the glory of war, and admirals and generals innumerable are offering tips in their Reminiscences for the more effective waging of the next, it is well to remind ourselves that in reality war is a purely bestial and devilish affair, having nothing whatever to do even with patriotism save for the hardness of men's hearts. We cannot any more think of war as anything but a damnable arrest of development and decency; it is not only the willingness to suffer agony, it is the willingness to inflict it. War cannot be reconciled with Christianity: there is no such thing as a Christian war.

We may not forget what has happened to the civilisation in which we so trusted. Progress in science and education and an increase of knowledge all round have not fulfilled our hopes for them by making life safer and more agreeable for our fellows; indeed, with selfishness unsubdued, man is as much more dangerous as his power for mischief has increased. Professor Huxley was justified when he said, many years ago, that our highly developed miracles had given us a command over non-human nature greater than that once attributed to the magicians. We are not to

be trusted with this fresh acquisition of scientific knowledge; we cannot handle it either to the glory of God or for the welfare of mankind.

Now that the ends of the earth have been brought together so that the world has become like a whispering gallery, and gossip goes round the nations almost as quickly as it goes round the village, all that is likely while human nature remains untamed is a magnificent opportunity for a first-rate family quarrel—the worst of all quarrels. Even our higher education has its dangers; there is a sense in which in its purely utilitarian forms it can only do for man what the Devil did for our Lord when he took Him up to the top of a high mountain and tempted Him to make a bid for the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof.

The progress and discovery of the nineteenth century, from which we hoped so much, have not saved us. Truly our Western civilisation is on trial. The ancient races of the East have never admitted the moral superiority of the West; lately they have witnessed the spectacle of those to whom the world at large looks for the realisation of

Christ's ideals engaged in mutual slaughter. Is it to be wondered that they remain unimpressed when we offer them the blessing of our civilisation, or dare to suggest that they should become as we are, and welcome our merchant and our missionary? Have we any right to the assumption that a continuance of a civilisation such as we have achieved, based upon force and competition, is essential for the welfare of the world? When the civilisation of Rome went down into the dust, no doubt contemporary opinion must have thought that no greater fatality could have happened to the world. Was it justified? I wonder. "The West," cries Gandhi, "has an unshakable belief in force and material welfare, therefore no matter how much it cries for peace and disarmament its ferocity will still cry louder." Are we living in the hectic last phase of a dying order, or may we cling to the hope that it is the darkness which precedes the dawn?

The disease from which the world is suffering is a species of locomotor ataxy—the limbs of the body are working without reference to the spirit. Dean Inge has summed up the situation in a phrase: "It remains to be seen

if civilisation is to be mended, or must be ended," and he goes on to add, "the times seem ripe for a new birth of religious and spiritual life which may remould society as no less potent force would have the strength to do."

By general consent, some religion that can eat up selfishness must prevail. If we are to contemplate the future undismayed, worldly wisdom and political craft will not suffice. Politicians are not as a rule expert in knowledge of human nature; if they were, they would realise that from a practical point of view alone they could only regain the lost confidence of the peoples by enlisting on the side of the angels.

It would be unfair, however, to suggest that we are influenced merely by considerations of self and race preservation. Man is "incurably religious"; he is, to use the phrase of George Sand, "tormented by divine things." Historically nothing is so persistent as religion, and the greatest of all the allies of religion is the need of God in the human soul. There is nothing so native to man as God. It is the fashion nowadays to speak with anxiety about the future of religion as if there were

grave doubts as to whether there were any future for it at all. It is foolish talk. We may well be concerned as to the forms which the religion of the future will take; we may even be apprehensive as to the fate of our own little denomination, but so long as human nature continues, so long will religion, which belongs to the very nerve and tissue of life, persist. Yet a real interest in religion is quite compatible with a total lack of interest in Churches and Church affairs.

To-day, men and women are coming to themselves after the insanities of recent years; they are looking back in longing to the lights of the Father's Home where their true life belongs and where the kiss of forgiveness and the peace of fellowship awaits them. In this generation we do not readily use the language of the New Testament. We do not say: "I will arise and go to my father and say unto him"; but, if we meet someone who is trekking homewards from a far country we long for the courage to bear him company. We do not question the wisdom of his choice of road; we merely regret the moral cowardice that dissuades us from a similar pilgrimage. What the Churches tell us to think is always

a matter for discussion; but what God in the soul of every man tells him to do is too plain for man's misunderstanding. It may be true that the modern man is not worrying about his sins, yet I fancy he is frequently worried about his own moral futility and strange inability to carry through the good resolutions of the night before—surely much the same thing.

I do not think that many who have passed through the severe moral strain that the events of recent years have imposed, have emerged with a greater confidence in themselves and their own unaided efforts after betterment. Few can have an unbounded respect for their own character, or believe that there can be any Utopia for the sons of men unless the problem of the character of the individual, their own included, be tackled. There is scarce a soul who does not know that the only reason why we do not follow the advice of Jesus Christ is that we are afraid to. Sin is not the creation of some cold-blooded and anæmic professor of theology, but a plain, honest fact which any man may know and recognise, since he will find one of its main citadels within his own heart. The late Lord

Morley once wrote of "that horrid burden and impediment upon the soul which the Churches call sin, and which by whatever name you call it is a real catastrophe in the moral nature of man." The truth is that the world is as it is because individually we are as we are. There are, alas, so many people just like ourselves—no better and no worse.

Yet there never existed a greater number of better intentioned people. We may not achieve much, but we mean extremely well. Indeed the contrast between our good intentions and our very mediocre achievements is as remarkable as it is pathetic. Of propaganda on behalf of good causes there is literally no end: the world is strewn with the literature of idealism, and we are perfectly prepared to give at least lip service to many admirable ideas for social and moral amelioration; but, as George Eliot said, "ideas are poor things until they become incarnate." The present world does not provide the first instance of an intellectual and moral awakening which has produced propaganda but little else.

It is we, as individuals, who are primarily the disappointing factor in the situation.

Fortunately, we are increasingly aware of our ineffectiveness. We need and we know that we need the re-enforcement of some power from without which will not merely censure our moral impotence, but enable us to expel the coward and enthrone the hero that is in the heart of every man; we need something, Someone, who can deal with this gradual paralysis of moral effort which spasmodic resolutions of amendment seem so powerless to check. We need the God of Jesus Christ and His power and His goodness; yet to associate with Him entails a loss of caste which few are willing to risk.

Never in history was there a greater opportunity for the Christian religion to make good its claims to turn men's lives upside down and to keep them active and joyous on their Father's business. The world's distractions are frankly attributable to one fact only—there are not enough Christians to go round, and the measure of the Church's failure is its inability to turn out a sufficiency of Christ-like men and women. The Christian creed can only vindicate itself by the production of Christian character. It is still true that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in

pain together until now, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.

Surely an impartial observer who could read the signs of the times and hear the brave claims of Institutional Christianity would be disposed to congratulate the Christian Church on having, so to speak, the ball at its feet. Is there a single one of Christ's values of which the world is not in urgent need, and can the Christian Society exist for any other purpose except to commend those values and to apply them to life? It is strange that any Christian to-day should lack a sense of mission. There never was a more alluring time in which to release the full Gospel of Jesus Christ for the service of mankind. The people are ready for a surprising amount of Christianity if only the leaders could show them the vital heart of the Gospel. I have heard men pity the lot of those of us who are commissioned to preach Christianity: I wonder why? On this side of the grave there is no task more timely or more urgent.

And there are three special reasons among many which would justify our impartial observer in believing that Institutional Religion could solve the present distractions of

the world, if only it were true to its ideals. Firstly, Christianity addresses itself to the actual needs of ordinary hard-pressed people; rightly understood it does not create but it solves problems. It does not seek to suggest to men a standard of virtue, alien and foreign to their own real values; nor to impose upon them the moral code of some God who has strange whims and fancies on the subject of morality, and wishes to see His servants engaged upon uncouth and unnatural tricks like performing animals at a circus. The Founder of Christianity, in what are known as the Beatitudes, said that the most blessed people were those whom we, ourselves, know also to be worthy of all praise. His conception of good people, the best people, is as a matter of fact our own. One reason for the superb relevance of Christianity to our conditions and our needs is that it challenges us to be what at our best moments we really desire to be—natural, ourselves. It asks us merely to be true to our own best ideals.

And secondly, Christianity stands or falls by its claim to give ordinary men "power to become." If Jesus Christ cannot make character, He can make nothing else. "Christi-

anity," to quote Dr. Burroughs, "combines the most absolute pessimism about man's unaided powers with an unquenchable optimism as to what—in God's hands—he may become." The religion of Jesus Christ meets men at the stage when, knowing what they ought to do, they find it almost impossible to do it. "It is the call of the perfect to what is imperfect and suffers in the consciousness of its imperfection." Our Lord never said to those who sought His aid: "Be healed," "Take up thy bed and walk," "Go and sin no more," without giving them the power to make His words effectual. He never mocked men by giving them counsel which they were not able to put into practice; having once met Him, they had no need to read a Catechism to discover that they were born again. It was good news and not merely good advice that came from the lips of the Founder of Christianity. And the Christian Church would seem to have the world at its feet since its claim is that it can extend the work of Christ by offering what He offered, that is "the power to become"—surely the paramount need of men and women. "The good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do,"

might well be the cry of this generation.

And lastly, the greatest of all the assets in the armoury of the Christian Church should be the personality upon Whom, ideally, it entirely depends, and from Whom alone is its one great source of strength. What has the Christian religion that other religions do not possess? The answer is quite simple—Jesus Christ. And He has no rival in the hearts of men. It has been said that it would be a fault of taste rather than a blasphemy to bracket His name with others in the list of the world's great heroes. He stands, by almost universal consent, alone. His religion is not a religion of words, but of actions. That is what makes it so infinitely compelling. Christianity is full of actable truths. It is concerned with actions first and only with discussions and definitions later. "The highest cannot be spoken," wrote Goethe; but, as Dr. Jacks has pointed out, the highest can be acted, and in the life and death of Christ the highest is offered to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Christianity began, as he reminds us, with a deed that was done. Before the talking began, something worth talking about was furnished. Christ is His

own credential; He does not need our little apologetics. Jesus did not live up to His teaching; He lived it. Whenever Christianity is not merely talked about but acted out by an individual, however simply, it is the most powerful thing in the world.

In Christianity there is the human touch and, after all, that is what men need. They want to know that there is a Personality behind their religion who really loves and cares, and that the heart of the Universe is friendly. Let me quote words written by Dr. Stanley Jones, the author of "The Christ of the Indian Road": "I thought my task was more complex than I now see it to be. . . . When I first went to India I was trying to hold a very long line—a line that stretched clear from Genesis to Revelation, on to Western civilisation and to the Western Christian Church. I found myself bobbing up and down that line. . . . I was worried. . . . I found the battle almost invariably being pitched at one of those three places: the Old Testament, or Western civilisation, or the Christian Church. I had the ill-defined but instinctive feeling that the heart of the matter was being left out. Then I saw that I could,

and should, shorten my line, that I could take my stand at Christ. . . . The sheer storm and stress of things had driven me to a place that I could hold. Then I saw that there is where I should have been all the time. I saw that the Gospel lies in the person of Jesus, that He Himself is the good news, that my own task was to live and present Him. My task was simplified."

Jesus Christ is what He is, not because of any official status that Christendom has given Him, but because He is what He is—the most real Man Who ever lived. As Mr. Middleton Murry has said: "He Himself stands behind everything that He said; His words speak to us across the centuries with the freshness of the present. It is here that that profound saying is truly verified, 'Speak that I may see Thee.'" It is not merely that never man spake as He spoke, but that never man was as He was. It is not a system but a soul that we find in Christ's teaching. He allures even while He eludes.

And there is this strange phenomenon about Him, that there have been countless people in every period who could give no other explanation for the fact that they had tried to

serve their generation, save that Jesus Christ had come to them across the ages and in winning their hearts had won also the loyal service of their whole being. He has not cramped their lives, but filled them with an overflowing vitality and mixed full life and free religion for them in a glorious profusion. They have found His Way not an imprisonment but a way out of prison. Might it not be expected that the appeal of the Christian Church must be irresistible, since for its God it has none other than Jesus Christ Himself, Whom all men love and Who acted out His religion to the bitter and glorious end?

And yet, strange to say, to put it bluntly, the Christian Church in none of its organised expressions is doing much business, nor is it dealing with the World Crisis in any effective way. It is immensely helpful to individuals, but it is not in the process of saving the soul of the world, and somehow a mass of alien matters—some of which belong to lower religions, and some of which do not belong to religion at all—have been suffered to complicate it and to distract it from its original purpose. Christianity is not on the spot. Men do not realise that it only asks them to

be natural; that it is God's answer to their actual need; that it offers them effective power; or even that it is wholly committed to the Love and values of a God Who is none other than Jesus Christ.

What has happened?

CHAPTER IV

"THE GALILEAN TOO GREAT"

WHAT has happened to Christianity? How comes it that this liberating, adventurous, straightforward and radiant thing offered, so to speak *ad hoc,* to the actual needs of hard-pressed people, has in these latter days become so strangely misunderstood and consequently so uninviting and apparently innocuous? If the religion of Jesus Christ, with its conditional promise to men and women of "power to become" what at their best moments they sincerely desire to be, is superbly relevant, why is it that the Christian Churches are doing such comparatively poor business? I am not now concerned to criticise in detail the organised expressions of Christianity with which we are familiar, but to suggest some kind of answer to this large and obvious problem.

There is an illuminating sentence in Mr. H. G. Wells's "Outline of History," which might well have been written for our learning

in this connection. "The truth is," writes Mr. Wells, "the Galilean has been too great for our small hearts." I know no words that explain so succinctly the appalling gulf that separates the unedited version of Christ's religion from those official and authorised versions of it which are now in currency. Truly, when every allowance has been made, the difference is sufficiently staggering. Can it be that original Christianity was meant to take its present forms, to develop as it has? Or is it that the Galilean has so far been too great for men's hearts, at least in their group formations? It seems as if the Institution was at once both essential and fatal to Christianity.

It is possible to appreciate certain great episodes in the life of the Christian Society, as well as the incredible difficulties with which the Christian faith has been confronted in its long march through history, but it seems too evident to need proof that little by little the infirmities of men have reduced the Gospel of Jesus Christ from an adventure in living to the docile acceptance of intellectual and traditional formulæ. The Church of the Spirit has always tended to be overwhelmed by the Church of Authority, and in spite of the re-

forming zeal of the greatest sons of Christianity there has been, in every age, a consistent inability, because of the smallness of men's hearts, to understand the wide charity of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Church History is indeed deeply disappointing, and largely because of the rarity of Christian charity.

How can any thoughtful student of the life and teaching of Christ honestly believe that many matters now looked upon by the Churches as being of vast importance can be related to the hopes of the Founder of Christianity when He chose those twelve out-and-out sort of men, whom He called "the sent," to preach the Kingdom of God? Without prejudice to the need for a Christian society and a Christian theology, I find it hard to persuade myself that there is any Church to-day that does not need radically to alter its outlook and its scale of values if it is to count itself as actually Christian. If there can be no distinction between what is Christian and what is Christ-like, we must surely confess that when the values of Jesus Christ are compared with the values of the Christian Institution, then something has gone dreadfully astray. Dr. Jacks writes: "Turning to the sources of

Christianity in the first three Gospels, we are struck by an immense contrast. There is no money in the purse, no victuals in the wallet, no munition in the magazine, no baggage-train, no commissariat, no provision for trench warfare—and no thought of it. We are in the presence of elemental realities more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory, more majestic than the successors of St. Peter in all their pomp. We are in another atmosphere. All this apparatus of defence and apology, of preaching and propaganda, of Church policies and Chapel oppositions—things that have given a form so strangely artificial to our conception of Christianity are here either secondary or absent altogether."

Is it conceivable that Christ could be orthodox within any Church to-day, or that He could sit at our ecclesiastical gatherings and enter with sympathy into most of the problems which we so love to debate? I fear that if our Lord were to come again, He would be compelled to acknowledge that Institutional Religion had corrected many of His values and forgotten many besides. It is doubtful who would be the more surprised: He at our values, or we at His. The Galilean

has been too great for our small hearts—that is exactly the truth. Religion has been imprisoned by its little janitors with their administrative complications.

It is difficult to believe that our Lord ever had any desire to authorise a hierarchy of men to define and curtail the boundaries of His religion, to lord it over their brother men or hedge the Father-God around with rules, regulations and traditions which He never mentioned and most of which he might possibly repudiate with sorrow if not with scorn. "The presuppositions," writes Dr. Inge, "upon which Institutionalism rests that Christ wished to found a hierarchal corporation with a divinely guaranteed monopoly of certain spiritual benefits, and that this corporation was intended to be a universal Cæsarean Empire embracing the whole world, are doctrines which I cannot see the slightest reason for believing."

I have endeavoured to steep myself in the mind of Christ as He speaks to me and to all men in the Gospels and from the pages of the countless Lives of our Lord that have poured out from the press in recent years, and I find it impossible to think that He

could sanction many of our accepted conventions, and especially those which cause Christians to be separated from one another by barriers of intellectual apprehension. At the moment, if a priest of the Church of England gives the Holy Communion to a devout follower of Jesus Christ who is not of his own persuasion, he is in effect told by Authority that while he has doubtless performed a Christian action, he has committed a kind of ecclesiastical foul which must not be done again. Can this spirit be attributed to Jesus Christ, or is it that we have come to care more for the prestige of our own Church and the niceties of "Church order" than for the Spirit of our Lord Himself? That is only one instance amongst many that could be given to show the strange pass to which ecclesiasticism has come.

Our Lord meant to simplify and not to complicate religion; not to perplex but to assist human nature, and above all to set men free; but ever since His time the corporations that have professed to extend His work have decided that His message needed intellectualising if it was to be preserved and that His offer of freedom needed curtailing, and they

have succeeded in doing both, even in the name of Jesus Christ. So the free, adventurous religion called Christianity has been changed to suit the will or the whim of administrators and especially of those who desired to obtain a status for themselves which would enable them, under "the sanction of God," to rule the human heart.

Men have said politely that Christ was wrong in His decision not to use magic, fear and authority in the founding of His Kingdom and they have hastened in every period to correct their Master's mistakes, often placing upon men burdens grievous to be borne, which cannot be identified with the cross of disinterested service and sacrifice which the Master demands and which indeed have prevented many from accepting the true cross. All through the centuries the Institution has quietly repressed the spontaneity and radiance of Christ Himself and has directed mankind, either consciously or unconsciously, to an ever increasing valuation of itself.

Even to-day we scarcely realise how little Jesus Christ is identified with the Church in the estimation of ordinary people who may not be thought of as turning their backs upon

God and goodness. The charity and radiance of Christianity has been torn away from its very soul by those who often sincerely desiring to do God service have been obsessed with the idea, so common to all men of small mental stature, that if freedom be offered to mankind it will necessarily run amok. And now we have got to the stage when it is actually believed by a multitude of people that the only approach to the God of Jesus Christ that may be guaranteed as perfectly safe is the channel of their own particular Christian denomination. Truly God has been created after the likeness of little men.

But it would not be fair to put all the blame on ecclesiastics and the ecclesiastically minded, for the world has played a subtle part in taming the dynamics of original Christianity. "Every spiritual ideal," writes Dr. Inge, "is perverted when the 'world' gets hold of it. The world is very clever; it likes to play with idealism and patronise it; that is the best way to draw its sting. The Florentines flattered Savonarola until they found he meant business, then they burnt him."

Perhaps, too, in every age *La mediocrité*

fond l' autorité. "It is the man," says Professor Harnack, "who knows religion only as a usage and an obedience who creates the priest for the purpose of ridding himself of the essential part of the obligations which he feels by loading him with them. He also makes ordinances, for the semi-religious prefer an ordinance to a Gospel." The ever-present temptation to escape from the demands which Jesus Christ originally made and still makes upon the individual have been too great for our small hearts. Men have felt that Christ was asking more from them than they were willing to give. His Personality has been too alluring and His claim on the human heart too compelling to permit them definitely to reject Him and it; it has been found comparatively easy instead to reduce the severity of His appeal by filtering it through a corporation in which men have a liability indeed, but of a very limited kind.

It has often been the way of the religious-minded to submit quietly to the aggrandisement of the Institution since it has been discovered that a personal communion with God through the mediating influence of a successful Institution is somehow much less fearful

and absorbing than that kind of communion in which the isolated human heart hears the Christ saying directly to itself: "Thou art the man," "Follow Me," or "Go and do thou likewise." Even while men hardly realise it, they welcome the Institution because it asks much less of them than the Christ would ask. So those who desire to go at least some of the way with the Founder of Christianity are inclined to escape from too strenuous a journey by sheltering themselves behind the walls of the Institution which is inclined to temper the gale of the Spirit of God. Unhappily the small hearts of men have all too often accepted the mild requests of the Institution as giving them some excuse for escaping from the severer demands of their Lord; they have willingly relegated their freedom and given it into the hands of a group of men who were often only too glad to treat them generously in return for an access of power and status.

As a result, the Christian Institution has tended to become of primary rather than subsidiary importance; it has been changed from something that was meant to be as large as the Love of God and as free as the breath of

the Holy Spirit—a movement and not a position—into a something that is supposed to have attained to finality and to which man must give adherence if he desires to escape condemnation. If the world now finds that it does not care for the Christian Churches, let it remember the share that it has had in creating what now appears unsatisfactory and unsatisfying.

True Christianity finds room and a welcome both for the institutional and the mystical. The Church of Authority and the Church of the Spirit should be one and the same thing, but it is idle to deny that in practice it is not so. For myself, I believe that the exaggerations and wrong emphases of the Church of Authority are much more dangerous to the welfare of Christianity than the undoubted exaggerations of reaction from authority to experience which to-day characterise the Church of the Spirit. A shrewd observer has said: "We must look to the mystic rather than the institutional type to give life to the next religious revival."

Speaking generally, men and women nowadays are almost wholly uninterested in the Christian Institution, not merely because they

are often selfish and morally rather contemptible, but because it does not reflect Christ, and the values of Christ, and the Love of Christ which is as the Love of God. I have never yet heard any man refused a hearing who preached the strong Christ of the New Testament. Jesus Christ draws all men when He is lifted up—but I have never yet seen any look of deep interest on the faces of an audience when a man, however able, was attempting to make enthusiastic converts to the Institution. To most the Church means nothing but a dreary succession of observances which it is the clergyman's thankless task to exact from a mystified and rather bored congregation once a week. It is thought that some sort of merit attaches to those who will go through with the business, but men do not expect to enjoy it. The Archbishop of York, who knows whereof he speaks, has lately used these words: "While Christ attracts, the Church repels."

Is it not true that while our Lord still allures the hearts of men, the authorised and official Churches do not give them any real impression that they exist to project Him into life, to stand for His values and to renew in

His Name the divine offer of human companionable love and the liberating "power to become," which are the things which men long to find in their God and which they instinctively recognise as being supreme in Jesus Christ?

We must face and deal with this terrible, bludgeoning fact that the most thoughtful men to-day have long ceased to expect redress for the world's distractions from the Christian Churches.

Frankly, it is asked, is the Church Christian—Christ-like? Is it standing for the moral values that Jesus Christ proclaimed? Is it offering men the friendship of God and the inexorable freedom of their own spiritual growth? Is it full of the spirit and charity of Jesus Christ? Is He at its centre? If not, what is its *raison d'être?*

A Church that does not obviously reflect Christ cannot be spoken of as the Body of Christ. A Church that is inextricably mixed with this world, accepting the world's values, stressing national and denominational enthusiasms, and, as a general rule, preaching a mild religion of "good form"—the religion of an English gentleman with the English

underlined—is not being responsive either to Christ or to the needs of this age. Truly, to be a "good Churchman" is often a positive bar to enthusiasm and to the enterprise of faith. No Church can have the right values that puts these things in its programme as paramount and sufficient. "I confess," says a recent writer, "that in some Church services that I have attended I have found myself wondering whether after all they were teaching Christianity, or a kind of English respectability which was not really a religious thing at all." The whole Gospel in reality is summed up in the two words, "Follow Me."

Politicians in their moments of insight tell us that nothing can usefully happen until there is a change of heart in the peoples of the world. They can themselves do little but call upon the Christian leaders to effect that change of heart, and there follows a series of sermons under some such title as "Christ or Chaos." The religious leaders are under the impression that they are offering Christ to the people as an alternative to chaos but, as a matter of fact, they are doing nothing of the sort. They are not so much offering Christ as that particular form of Churchmanship

which they themselves affect—a wholly different matter. When will the leaders of Christianity learn that by the judgment of their God and the verdict of men the exclusive spirit and Christianity are for ever incompatible? "We must put out," so it has been said, "on the unknown ocean of completest possible tolerance, not only because Christ ventured so much for the sake of inclusion, but because these vast waters seem to be the only religious sea yet unexplored while all other coasts are littered with the wrecks of the Christian Faith."

And why should men enthuse about the Christian Churches as they now know them? How many find the soul of Christ at the ceremonies of their parish church or local chapel? How many find the spirit of Christ where church people are gathered together in His Name? How many men and women are taught to think of God genially as the divine Lover of men Whose will it is that all men should be saved, and how many in their moments of joy or sorrow ever truly exclaim: "I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord"?

The Christian Churches have lost the hearts

of the people, not because they are preaching Christ and men have determined that they will not listen or attend, but because they have *not* preached the full Gospel of Christ, which even now would run like fire over the face of the earth, had we who profess and call ourselves Christians sufficient faith to go right out for His values, accepting them first for ourselves, and then requiring that our own Church should acclaim them as essential for its corporate life.

As things are now, I do not want to importune any man into this or that Church unless, after a process of thought, he can be brought to see that it will keep him close to his Lord, vigorous in service, and that it will do nothing to make him contemptuous towards those who are following sincerely by another path. I cannot blame the thoughtful who stay without the Christian Church, honestly asserting that as things are now they cannot join any one of the multitude of sects which are offered to them as a full and final edition of Christianity.

I cannot bear to think of the poverty of our present sectional outlooks which make it inevitable that as my children grow up they will

be compelled, if they belong to my branch of Christianity, to take up the quarrels of their great-grandfathers, and possibly to question the validity of the route to God which others by His mercy have found direct for themselves. Surely no Christian can have a quarrel with any other Christian; he has no opponents save the world, the flesh and the devil. No longer can I wax enthusiastic about a Church that does not respect and welcome the religious opinions of people of other outlook and upbringing and does not treat their beliefs as reverently as it would wish its own to be treated. I am not pleading here for uniformity of thought and worship but for a number of Churches welcoming, supplementing and rejoicing in one another, and for a mutual toleration of divergent uses within the fellowship of one universal Society whose business it is to unite in confronting anti-Christ. My plea is not for the end of differences between Christians, but only for the recognition of their secondary importance.

And lastly, Christianity is not intellectualism. When all is said there are very few things in the Christian faith that are of vital importance and these are not intellectual.

What has all this emphasis on intellectualism to do with the religion of Jesus Christ? I was taken to task lately by the editor of a Church journal—who reaches theological conclusions quite distinct from those which are reached by editors of other Church journals—for confessing that I was uninterested in theology. No doubt I should have qualified my statement. I have nothing but respect for theology, provided it be not confused with revelation,* and provided we remember that there is no such thing as a final theology any more than there is a final astronomy; but I confess that I am heartily tired of the majority of theologians. George Tyrrell even said that he did not think that they were "an essential part of the Church's divine institution." For the recovery of Christendom, I am not looking to theologians. There is a good deal to be said for not leaving the case for religion too much in their hands. At the moment, their verdicts receive more than their fair

* "The difference between Theology and Revelation is great and must not be confused. The latter is the work of God's Spirit in man; the former, the work of man's mind reflecting on God's work."—GEORGE TYRRELL.

share of attention. We allow them to overawe us too much, and if Christianity has become a strangely complicated affair, they are largely to blame. Once, no doubt, Christianity was their love, but now one feels it is their business. Too often to the learned, religion appears in the light of a science to be studied rather than a life to be lived. We are suffering terribly from academic religion. We are right to have a proper respect for intellect, but we need to remember that it goes astray the moment it ceases to think in terms of men, women and children. The worst of some thinkers is that—being aloof from life—they often think astray. I have heard more abysmal nonsense talked in a Senior Common Room than at a mothers' meeting. I am not prepared now, as I was when I was younger, to make obeisance to mere intellect and that cold wisdom that is divorced from passion: I do not think its record is creditable. I would like the merely intellectual to know that the author of this book distrusts them as deeply as they distrust him.

There are too many theologians who are more interested in scoring off the other fellow and keeping the ball rolling than in seeking

for the truth; of them individually it might be said as Emil Ludwig has said of Napoleon, "He was always clever, but he never grew wise." Also, it is high time that some theologians remembered that it is definitely unmoral to declaim: "Thus saith the Lord," when it would be truer to say, "This is my opinion and the opinion of those who think with me."

A guide at the Sorbonne once said: "This is the hall where the doctors of divinity have disputed for four hundred years." "Indeed," said the visitor, "and pray what have they settled?" And yet the doctors could assist us so much if only they would become simpler in expression, less interested in the thrust and parry of debate, less "elaborately uninforming," to quote Mr. H. G. Wells, less anxious to work out God like a proposition in Euclid, and more sincerely desirous of revealing the truths that they have discovered in a language that simple people can understand. Of the hundreds of books on religion that yearly see the light, the vast majority are totally unintelligible to any who have not made theology a special subject, or who are unfamiliar with religious phraseology.

My concern in this chapter has been to prove what I fear needs very little proof, that if there is but little enthusiasm for Organised Religion and if the Churches are doing comparatively poor business, at least part of the reason is that the full Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its straightforward simplicity is not being preached by the Churches. I know that many will rise up to tell me that this is a selfish age; that men are not prepared for sacrifice; that women are thoughtless and careless, and that high ideals have no hold upon this generation. Be that as it may, when the Christian Church has offered the nation the full Gospel, then it may be true that the nation will refuse it, but until that has come to pass I can neither count men and women blameworthy who are not interested in the partial presentation of Christ which each Church gives, nor can I admit that the Christian Gospel would be preached to this age in vain.

After all, the heroism of our generation is not to be doubted; nor its power and willingness to think things out and through; nor its hatred of sham and humbug; nor its love of what is real and sincere; nor its devotion to the person of Christ.

Maybe it is time that the Churches, following the example of their Master, should die for the people; they have lived for themselves too long. I pray that my Church—which, let me frankly acknowledge, I believe to be the largest-hearted Church in Christendom and which I love dearly, not perhaps as it is but as it might be—and that every other Church should ask of itself this one straightforward question: "If this Church to which I belong is not everywhere assisting men to be what at their best moments they desire to be, that is, followers of the standards of Christ; if it is identified with values that Jesus Christ would not approve and is not identified with Christlikeness; if Christ is not at its centre; if it is uncharitable and crippled by the spirit of exclusiveness; what should be done without delay by way of amendment and by way of sacrifice that the voice of Christ may be heard in all its original freshness, that the power of God may be known and that the attractiveness of unconscious goodness may be brought into its own?"

There is no cause on earth for which one who cares about the future of mankind could better pray and work than for the recovery

of vital Christianity. It is never too late to enlarge men's small hearts and their Churches for Christ's sake. We must cease to think that the pains of growth are the pangs of death. Mercifully the Spirit of God is still pressing upon the world; He will enter wherever He sees a desire, however faint, to welcome Him. God cannot withhold His grace; it is we who refuse it. I would not have the effrontery or even take the pains to write this book did I not believe that there is still a great future for Institutional Christianity, if only it would but recite the "Veni Creator" and receive without question, doubt or fear the guidance which He has for these days; not shirking the chaos and confusion which must ensue.

Above all things, it seems to me essential that we of the Christian Churches should now attempt individually to enlarge our hearts by a greater adventure in the art of Christian living, by an increase of thought and constant communication in prayer with Jesus Christ Himself, so that we may be great enough to comprehend the breadth, and length, and

depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth understanding.

Am I asking for a cheapened Gospel by suggesting that we should no longer lay stress upon many values now thought of as of such paramount importance? I do not think so. Indeed I believe that a simplified religion would cost men much more than this complicated one to which we are so addicted. It is infinitely easier to receive the theology of a Church, to obey its rules and to shout its battle-cries than to undertake the awe-ful task of accepting and living out in life the values which Jesus Christ ascribed to God, accepted for Himself, and asks from those who would be His disciples. Yet this and nothing else is Christianity.

CHAPTER V

A SOCIETY NECESSARY

SOME, if there be any, who have agreed with me so far may very naturally ask the pertinent question: "Need there be a Church at all?" "Did Christ intend His religion to be organised?" There are, indeed, a number of thoughtful people to-day who are of the opinion that what is spiritual cannot be organised without the loss of its very soul. They maintain that religion is crushed and devitalised as soon as any attempt is made to reduce it to a system.

Certainly there are grounds for this point of view. "The Gospel came," as has been said, "an ideal message into an un-ideal world and, as in Shakespeare's figure, like the dyer's hand it has been subdued to the stuff it worked in." The genius of Christianity does not seem to be at home in our Church and Chapel atmosphere. Churches when once established appear to offer only a second or third-hand religion.

We cannot forget that the Founder of Christianity was unable to remain a member of the orthodox and authorised Church of His day. He was discredited by its Authorities and compelled to leave the Church for the open air. He was an excommunicated man; excommunicated because the Church was too small for Him and because He was at no pains to disguise the fact. Ever since our Lord's day it has seemed that many of God's truest disciples have lacked official credentials. Undoubtedly there is a strong case to be brought against Institutional Religion, and it were better to realise the fact.

Churches are strange phenomena, and it is only because we have not thought about them, or taken them seriously, that they fail to surprise us as they well might. "God," we maintain, "is always everywhere." "If I climb up into the Heavens, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand guide me." The range and power of the sun, is as nothing to that of Almighty God. We do not contemplate the creation of a Society that man may enjoy the warmth of the sun,

nor do we attempt to limit its benediction to chosen people. We gratefully accept the fact that God permits both the just and the unjust to partake of its radiant comfort. Yet, strangely enough, we do not hesitate to suggest that those who are desirous of obtaining the full benefits of God would be well advised to join some closed Society—preferably the one to which we ourselves belong. Is it surprising that men are puzzled and sometimes even dismayed at what seems to them like an attempt to confine within a narrow circumference the whole range and active power of God's beneficence?

Undoubtedly the general opinion to-day is indifferent, if not hostile, to Institutional Religion, at least as it now exists. The adverse opinion of the world at large should not determine our decision, but it should encourage us to careful thought as to why we deem an ordered Society essential for the welfare of Christianity, and what we consider the primary purpose of that Society.

Although Jesus Christ was a severer critic of the Church than of the World, it is, I think, difficult for an unprejudiced reader of

the New Testament to escape the conviction that He desired His followers to be associated together in a Fellowship and to partake of a Fellowship Meal. If it be said that our Lord did not found the Church, it may with equal truth be said that He did not appear to have taken any steps for His message to be reduced to writing for the benefit of posterity. Certainly He seems to have taken a Church for granted even while the Kingdom of God, about which our official books are so strangely silent, was His primary interest and concern. Although the broken fellowships which now exist under the name of Churches can by no stretch of imagination be thought of as anything but caricatures of what He desired, it does not alter the fact that an ordered Society appears to have been recognised, sanctioned and approved by the Founder of Christianity.

Further it is unthinkable that Jesus Christ, Who always thought in terms of man's needs and was so surely in touch with human requirements, would have been indifferent to the demands of ordinary people—of whom God created so many, possibly, as Abraham Lincoln suggested, because He liked them so

much. For the vast majority of professing Christians it would certainly seem that a Fellowship of some kind is a necessity.

Group organisation is still essential for mankind, and men are not often religiously or socially at their best in isolation. There is a great deal of climbing that may be done by oneself, but when the great heights are to be scaled, it is best attempted by a company of people who are joined together for safety and achievement. Like-minded people will insist upon coming together to acclaim and pursue their ideals. They need the encouragement of other pilgrims on the same road if they are to persevere and not faint by the way. It is well to remember the words of that great Christian theologian, the late Baron von Hügel: "Souls who live a heroic spiritual life *within* great religious traditions and institutions attain to a rare volume and vividness of spiritual insight and conviction and reality seldom in reach of the contemplative, however ardent, who walk by themselves."

In the serious adventure of Christianity, man will require an ordered society with its rules and regulations, its officers and such ceremonies as the Founder of his religion

ordained and Christian experience has proved to be not merely of service but tantamount to the offer of Christ's Life to those who are fit to receive it. "Did we," as has been said, "look on the religious institution, not as an end in itself, but simply as fulfilling the functions of a home, giving shelter and nurture, opportunity of loyalty and simple service on the one hand, conserving stability and good custom on the other, then we should better appreciate its gifts to us and be more merciful to its necessary defects." After all, the abuses and corruptions of the Church are no arguments against the Institution unless they can be shown to be inseparable from it.

But the purpose of this book is not to plead permission for the existence of a Church which Jesus Christ seemed to have sanctioned and mankind seems to require, but rather to suggest the kind of Church that the Founder of Christianity might approve.

Even if what has been suggested about the Church be true, there is no reason why those who profess Christianity should separate themselves from the Christian Institution without real regret, or a sincere desire to be joined up with it one day afresh or anew.

Every would-be disciple must decide whether or not he will enrol himself in the Christian Society, and it is no light judgment to make. While, as Bishop Gore has said, " a man must ultimately follow the leading of his own conscience in matters of religion," this right of private judgment carries with it a responsibility for careful and painstaking thought. A man must not do violence to his conscience, but he must be sure that it is his conscience and not something less respectable trading under its name that is making the decision. In lightly rejecting the assistance of the Church, men may be denying themselves what others have found, and what they with a little perseverance may find, to be infinitely valuable and strength-giving.

There are many whom it would be impertinent to criticise who have carefully informed themselves about the Church and do not feel able to join any of its branches: their criticisms would repay the most respectful attention. But little value need be attached to the opinion of those who have carelessly cast aside what they have been at no pains to understand. They might, had they tried,

have found a considerable residue of gold within ecclesiastical ore.

There is a further consideration which will repay attention. Religion to-day has reacted over-much from authority to experience. We are inclined to make our feelings and sensations the test of the truth of the Christian revelation. Church is attended because at the moment we feel like it. Prayers are said or not said according to the mood. This is not the stuff out of which noble character is created. People nowadays prefer being asked to feel than invited to think, but that does not mean that their preferences are to be encouraged. Much as we dislike discipline, it is an essential ingredient in Christianity. There is still great truth in the words which were spoken by Bishop Butler of Durham, that great moral philosopher, in the eighteenth century when religion was passing through one of its darkest hours: "External acts of piety and devotion and the frequent returns of them are necessary to keep up a sense of religion which the affairs of the world would otherwise wear out of men's hearts."

The tendency of our age, from which re-

ligion is not exempt, is to do as little work as possible and to do it with one eye on the clock. In the religious life of ordinary people this lack of effort and perseverance is gravely apparent. Most men and women need more than they are ready to confess to correct their life of drift by the discipline of an organised religion. A Church may well be the great means whereby associated mankind can seek and find eternal ideals.

Those who claim to be independent of tradition for their spiritual life would be surprised to discover how much they really owe to traditional religion. It is strange, too, to find how extensively many modern thinkers who suggest novel ways of salvation to a distracted world have plagiarised from the Gospels and especially from the Sermon on the Mount.

The attainment of a mystical communion with God that is independent of every conventional aid is sufficiently distinguished to be very uncommon, and much that passes muster for it is in reality nothing of the kind. I have come to be suspicious of any such claim by myself or others that is not the outcome of a period of careful thought and dis-

ciplined conduct, and that does not result in an immediately quickened sense of service. I believe that a hard-thinking religious man was once apprehended of God all of a sudden on the Damascus road, not primarily because of what the record tells, but because of what happened afterwards in his life. No doubt wonders of this kind, if not of similar moment, still occasionally occur, but they too can only be verified by their fruits. There are people who delight in telling their friends of strange and mystical experiences in which they have played the principal part. When those experiences lead to no achievement more effective than tea-table talk, I confess that I am inclined to question, not that something abnormal—I had almost written, odd—may have happened, but whether what happened had anything to do with God. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the best possible test of the origin and even the reality of all mystical experiences.

I believe there will come a time when there must needs be a much wider conception of spiritual truth than we possess to-day; a time when we shall gratefully recognise and welcome all that every ennobling religion has to

offer to our partial knowledge of eternal verities. When that day dawns, no doubt many will wonder at the littlenesses of our present partial and sectional glimpses of and affirmations about God.

> "Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be,
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

After all, some of the theories of our great-grandfathers seemed very wise and final to them; to us they seem almost foolish and certainly very partial. I have little doubt that truths and principles that now seem to us worth dying for, will in years to come appear to those who follow us only partially true and certainly not nearly so crucially important as we now think them.

But I am under the impression that for the majority of people it were wiser and happier to be linked up with some Christian Society, provided it does no violence to their conscience, than to drift casually along genially wishing well to Christianity, but owning allegiance to none of its disciplined forms, and rejecting the assistance which Christian experience has found to be of vital value to

innumerable people in every age. After all, while it is undoubtedly attractive to let our feelings run riot in matters of religion, it is not usually the path of wisdom or fully serviceable to the highest interests of righteousness. "Other things being equal," writes Miss Underhill, "a baby benefits enormously by being born within a social framework, rather than in the illusory freedom of 'pure' nature; so the growth of the soul is or should be helped and not hindered by the nurture it receives from the religious society in which it is born. Only, indeed, by attachment open or virtual through life or through literature to some group can the new soul link itself with history and so participate in the hoarded spiritual values of humanity." For myself, I desire to put this whole problem of churchmanship upon the individual conscience and to trust people to come to a thought-out conclusion on the subject within a reasonable length of time, and I am willing without question to accept their judgment for themselves, provided only they have made the problem one of real concern.

But when this has been said, I am obliged in honesty to confess that just as our Lord's

main interest was the Kingdom of God and not the Church, so I believe that the primary allegiance of the individual is directly to Jesus Christ, and that the Church exists for the subsidiary purpose of keeping men true to their primary purpose. A Church is only serviceable to mankind if it is able to achieve for them this most urgent and necessary task. "The root of all evil in the Church," said the author of "Ecce Homo," "is the imagination that it exists for any other purpose than to foster virtue." In the minds of a good many Christian people their Church has a pride of place for which there is no justification.

The first concern of those who would be Christians should not be to add their name to the roll of members of any Church or Chapel, but to adventure on their own in the difficult business of Christian living. The Church comes immediately after a man has definitely decided to take Jesus Christ seriously, and the main reason for linking himself to it should be, not because it is necessarily essential—for I confess that some of the best Christians I know do not belong to any Church—but because he sincerely believes it will strengthen the fellowship of those who love the Lord

Jesus and will assist him to strive persistently towards the goal which he has chosen—at the same time imposing upon him that measure of discipline (no less necessary than other forms of training) that most men need if they are to remain consistently true to their ideals.

I remember two French regiments in 1914, both of which, I believe, in the persons of their units were equally brave and determined, but when the day of intense trial arrived one regiment insufficiently disciplined was unable to attack; the other, which had been through the hard and unlovely task of parade-ground drill and discipline, went instinctively over the top at the word of command.

While I believe that discipline is essential to the Christian life and that the discipline of a Church, that can honestly be accepted as reasonable and just, is profoundly for the benefit of most men and women, yet I here and now confess and record that I have come to believe that the task of the Christian Institution, so far as I can understand it, is subsidiary and not primary, and that the Institution should not possess that primary

importance which from habit we have grown to accord to it.

Moreover there are certain people, though possibly not a great number, whom I have no desire to see importuned into allegiance to any Christian society. It would give me no pleasure, for instance, to find Tagore signing the electoral roll in the vestry of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. I fancy there are some whose style would be cramped and whose witness would be curtailed by successful efforts to enclose them within the necessarily somewhat narrow circumference of any denominational adherence. I believe the time has come when Authority should proclaim the fact that churchmanship, however serviceable, is not essential to Christian living or the profession of Christianity, and should recognise that a real interest in religion is quite compatible with a total lack of interest in Churches and Church affairs. Sacramentalism is essential for most men, but we must remember that there are some who are sacramentalists, not as we clergy wish them to be, but by the fact that they have ways unrecognised officially of drawing into their very

souls the Real Presence of their Lord and Master.

When it was believed, as it was for many a long century, that there was no salvation outside the Church, grave indeed seemed the conditions of those who remained without, but if we are honest this is not our present belief. We do not, thank God, any more believe in the favouritism of the Almighty; nor is it thinkable that men and women need be unregenerate who for one reason or another are not within the Christian Society. The intolerable idea that God only revealed Himself to one people and left all the others in darkness is vanished save in the least enlightened circles.

I should wish the leaders of Christianity to own and proclaim the fact that the Christian Society exists primarily to assist those who find it immensely difficult to live an isolated Christian life, and that its ceremonies and even its Eucharist (to me the Eucharist, at least as I think our Lord intended it, is the heart and soul and joy of my Christian life) have no magical properties about them, but depend for their undoubted benefits on the

attitude and faith of those who come reverently to receive them. They are the offer of assured strength for service pledged.

And here in sheer honesty I must say one word about infant baptism. Surely no one is more fit than an innocent child to be, as it were, placed in the arms of our Lord and admitted as a little member of His flock? While infant baptism might well be one of the most beautiful ceremonies of the Christian Church, a ceremony of presentation, protection and welcome, cannot we once and for all get rid of the idea that its intention is to rescue a child from the wrath of God, and that there is some magical regeneration about it from which an unbaptised child is necessarily exempt? Even baptised human nature is not necessarily regenerate.

At the moment, the great majority of clergy look with something approaching suspicion on those who are not linked up with one or another Church, even sometimes regarding with considerable disapproval those who do not find their spiritual life within the walls of their own parish church. While there are many who might be benefited by regular attendance at their parish church, we must

surely remember that our own expression of Christianity may not always be that which is most helpful to a parishioner. Those who refrain from our ministrations are not to be thought of or spoken to or about with any spirit that is disrespectful or disdainful. I do not think we are likely to accept this unless we are prepared to grant that the prestige of our own particular Christian Institution is neither so immense nor so important as we have been hitherto led to suppose.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." Surely we may gratefully recognise that this need not refer to an Institution and yet believe that the Christian Society with its service of admission and its joyous Fellowship Meal is essential for the welfare of the Christian faith. Personally, I confess I do not want anything more than that "mixture of charity and mysticism with the Eucharist in its primitive form" which George Tyrrell said Loisy prophesied would be the religion of the future, but let me stress the fact that I speak only for myself.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN IS A CHURCH CHRISTIAN?

If, then, a Christian Society with at least a minimum of rules and regulations seems to be essential for the majority of those who would practise the difficult art of Christian living, it is above all things necessary that we should recognise of what nature and spirit that Society should be.

As a preliminary to this inquiry, I would remind my readers of an axiom that I ventured to lay down in Chapter II. It was maintained there that no Church can be Christian—Christ-like—if it be corporately expressing or upholding judgments, values and traditions that are alien to the mind of Christ, or which the conscience of the individual who was endeavouring to live his life so that Jesus Christ could approve it would repudiate for himself as being less than Christian. In a sentence, *a Church may not be corporately less Christian than the individual Christian.*

If this be true, as seems obvious, then our task of discovering at least the outline of a Christian Society appears at first blush comparatively easy, for we have but to recognise what Christianity entails for the individual and then apply it to the corporate life of the Institution. But, in fact, the task is complicated because many maintain that it is immensely difficult for an individual to know the mind of Christ for himself. I wonder? It is indeed incredibly difficult at times to know what the Christian attitude ought to be towards this or that large problem of public concern. What, for instance, is the right attitude towards drink and war and money and slums and destitution? Without self-deception we may often be at a loss, since people whose motives as Christians cannot be suspect hold opinions that are diametrically opposed. Here, too, we may passionately desire that Jesus Christ might come again in the flesh that we might ask His counsel and advice. The Gospels make us eager, but they do not tell us nearly enough; they ask as many questions as they answer, and we long to sit at the feet of our Lord that He might show us the better way.

But as for ourselves and the problems of our own individual life, do we not as a matter of fact almost invariably know perfectly well what He would have *us* to do under almost every given circumstance? While the sayings of Jesus are often perplexing—as He meant them to be—His meaning, His general drift, and His fundamental ideas are extraordinarily clear. I have little reason to know the counsel that Christ would give to any of my neighbours, but I believe that if I were willing to expel the coward and enthrone the hero that is in my heart, as it is in the heart of every man and woman, I should not be without guidance as to what I, myself, ought to do. There are few who seek the mind of Christ for themselves, as diligently as others seek wealth or fame, who remain unenlightened.

Now what has this belief in the possibility of God's guidance for the individual to do with His guidance for the Society? Well, frankly I believe that Christianity for the individual and for the Society is one and the same thing, and that the primary demand on a Christian Church is not to interest itself in "policies" and propaganda, but to embody

and express corporately those virtues which are expected of a Christian disciple.

I find myself at issue with those, amongst the best in Christendom, who desire to see their Church identified with this or that progressive policy of social reform and necessarily supporting the political views of those who promise a Utopian existence (which some call the Kingdom of God) here and now for the largest number of people. I yield to no one in my passionate desire for social amelioration. I do not believe that the people can have a fair chance of the fullest life until the conditions under which they work and in which they live are better than they are to-day. It is intolerable that Christianity should bless the gutter and leave men in it.

"A Church that believes in the Incarnation," writes Dr. J. H. B. Masterman, "is bound to claim for every child adequate education, physical, mental and spiritual; the decencies of home life; green places in which to play; and reasonable security against standing all day idle, when school days are over, because no man hath hired him."

I do not want the dispossessed to be content with their lot. There is a dissatisfaction at

injustice which in my judgment is divine. I am myself identified with political ideals and ideas that are anathema to conservatively minded people, and I wish to see men of my profession in the van of every wise scheme for social betterment.

Yet I do not believe that the Church is called into the world for social reform, but to set an example within the world of how a Society can corporately express values that are expected of the individual Christian. I should wish the Church to become the Body of Christ in practice and not merely in phrase, in that it displays in its own life, as well as in the lives of its members, those spiritual values which no one can doubt were the values which Christ not merely assigned to the Father-God, but lived out in His own person.

There is only one influence that converts, and that is the example of a life which is shot through and through with the glory and strength of the Spirit of Christ. The main task of the Church is to prove that it is itself interested above everything else in living a life as sacrificial, as honest, as straightforward and as charitable as was the life of its Founder. In a word, the Church cannot pos-

sibly be less righteous than a wholly converted Christian individual. It must show beyond any shadow of doubt that in its corporate capacity it is living true to the standards which are expected of men who could be called Christ-like.

Just as I believe it is usually only our moral cowardice that inclines us to say that we do not know what is the mind of Christ on this or that problem that confronts us, so I believe that there is a form of hypocrisy practised, unconsciously if you like, by those whose business it is to direct ecclesiastical policy which suggests that it is wellnigh impossible to know what is the mind of Christ for their Institution. I do not think that it is more difficult to know the mind of Christ for an Institution than for an individual, and I fancy there is extraordinarily little difference between the two. In each case men delight to make excuse for the moral cowardice which dissuades them from doing what is difficult, by suggesting that things being as they are, it is extremely hard and indeed almost impossible to know what is the right and the Christ-like thing to do. I do not believe it.

If the world could sincerely say that it

recognised in the values and judgments of the Christian Institution those values and judgments which it recognises in Christ, the Church would have the world at its feet because it would be itself at the feet of its Lord. Incidentally such a church would make a much greater contribution to the social problem than any Church now makes. Our Lord dealt indirectly with that problem in the only way in which it can be effectively dealt with, namely, by the conversion of the individual to different standards and ideals. Our present attempt to cure our social ills by societies and mass movements under which the individual escapes responsibility, and by political dodge and compromise—anything indeed that does not involve sacrifice, personal conversion and hard and honest work—has failed and is failing in that it is not the way of Christ.

If once the so-called Body of Christ moved amongst men as once our Lord Himself moved, winning respect because it was obviously living its teaching and prepared to die for its principles, then it would compel the attention of mankind and would rebuke the world not so much by precept as by example. There would be an end to this halt

in human progress, and humanity would be on the march again to a better land.

All this sounds immensely simple, and indeed the conversion of the Church to the mind of Christ is infinitely more simple than we allow. It is only a matter of Christian people each within their own communion demanding that their corporate expression of Christianity should not lack any single virtue required of the perfect citizen in the Kingdom of God. If it should be asked how those virtues are to be known and where is the standard and guide, the answer is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount—that terrible indictment of our civilisation in which there is so little of poverty of spirit, purity of heart, mercy, meekness or peace.

I do not think that we can realise how difficult and yet how simple a thing it is to be a Christian until we try without prejudice to think our Christianity through once again, or possibly for the first time, in terms of Jesus Christ. If we can persuade ourselves to do this, forgetting for the moment denominational loyalties and inherited traditions to which we have given little thought, we shall not only discover fresh values which we are

bound to accept for ourselves, but we shall also come to realise how essential those values are for the Institution if it is to witness compellingly to its Lord.

Primarily, Christianity is a way of living—an attempt at a certain kind of life—and not a philosophy. In the first instance it has nothing to do with intellectualism or theology, nor even with membership in a society. Theology will and churchmanship may follow, but they are attempts to explain experience and aids to those who have determined to accept the way of living and the standards of conduct which Christ demands.

Christian discipleship requires that a man shall be a certain kind of man, living a certain kind of life in the heart of the world; that he is a certain kind of father, brother, friend, employer or employee; that, in a word, he has that attitude towards life which was characteristic of Jesus Christ. Above all, Christianity entails in a disciple a constant endeavour to believe and realise that simple straightforward conception, revealed by our Lord, of the Father-God Who is no less perfect in love than the most ideal human father whom men can possibly conceive.

Our Lord lived in the continual consciousness of God's presence, and He announced that men could have free access at any time, without the mediation of anyone or the assistance of courtiers, into the presence of the Father. It is our duty, however hard, to attempt to realise God's presence with that natural simplicity and, let me add, serenity that was so characteristic of the Son of Man. We have to accept the Fatherhood of God and to see if we can make it increasingly real to ourselves; indeed, to see if it works. It is tragic to remember that it is almost easier to make the Fatherhood of God understood of men by spelling the word with a small "f," so greatly has the Institution dehumanised Christianity. No matter how we twist the words of Jesus, we cannot make them represent God except as a Father. Those best worship God who think of Him first and foremost, not as a King, nor as a judge, but just as a parent to be loved and trusted.

There is no doubt besides that our Lord taught the wealth of nothingness and the poverty of riches, and that no man could fully serve his brother men if he had an eye on his own possessions or prestige.

Jesus Christ seemed to say that if the house of this world was built on the principles which He taught, it would stand, and that if it was not it would fall; not because the Father-God would cast it to the earth in anger (not Christ but Christians have made God a punisher), but because it would fall as a house would naturally fall that was built not on rock but on a foundation on which no permanent building could stand. Has this no bearing on the problems which the last fifteen years have not created but emphasised? Civilisation which has paid no heed to the teaching of Christ has wellnigh collapsed. We have neither believed in the goodness of God and His good will towards us, nor have we thought of treating other men even of our own nation and creed as blood-brethren with us. Are we to blame the Christian God because, having built our civilisation on a basis which our Lord said would lead to collapse, we see around us everywhere signs of disintegration? Ought not this spectacle to drive us back to rather than away from God? Surely Christ would weep over our world just as He wept over Jerusalem because it would not recognise the few elementary things

that belonged to its peace. Well may some believe that the way of Jesus the Idealist has more right to a trial than the way of the world which, as a matter of fact, has been thoroughly tried and found appallingly wanting. The Realists who have had every chance have made a proper mess of the world. How ominous that we should still retain them in the saddle!

Again, Christ demands of those who would follow Him that they should create goodness by finding it in every single soul and by treating the motives of men and women as if they were as much to be respected as are their own. He won Peter by a look when we should have attempted to win him by abuse. The Prodigal Son was kissed into repentance when we should have told him that he was not fit to sit down with the elder brother. Our Lord created goodness by finding it. He remitted or retained sins, not in virtue of any confessional, but by His attitude towards sinners. He hated sin and yet he loved sinners, but no one has ever dared to suggest that He was soft or sentimental. We falsify Jesus by too much use of the word gentle, forgetting that much of His teaching was shouted in the teeth of

a mob brandishing stones and howling for His life. There was only one weapon that Christ condescended to use—that weapon was love.

It were better to risk being deceived by our neighbours than that we should be of the type that is always suspicious of other people being just about to deceive us, the type that hits first for fear lest he himself should be hit. It were better that we should be deceived ninety times nine than that our eyes should be so dimmed by distrust that we could not see Christ in the eyes of every man and woman. I verily believe that God wants us to love Him first of all in our fellows. If it were not so, as someone has said, He would have given us eyes with which to pierce Heaven.

I believe too that our Lord wants a company of strong, brave, happy companions of the out-and-out sort, the type that would be thought too dangerous and outspoken to have a hand in those policies of compromise without which little can now be effected in Church or State. I believe our Lord can use this type and can mould such men for His purpose because of their simple belief in the love

of His Father-God and their unsophisticated attitude towards their brother men.

I think He wants men as loving and as lovable as Francis of Assisi and that dear real or mythical brother, Juniper the Fool. It was not the poverty of Francis that caught the imagination of the world, but his joyousness, his simplicity, his foolishness if you like, which was that of a man who actually dared to live as if he were really in the presence of God and as if even the birds were conscious of His Fatherhood. The final fact about St. Francis (as Mr. Laurence Housman says) was not his poverty, but that as having nothing he possessed all things.

It is the freshness, the vitality, the strength and the radiance of Christianity, that has been damped down in these latter days, which the world now needs if it is to be reborn. The religion of our Lord should encourage men to ride out joyously for Him and His values, and not to dig themselves in within an Institutional fortress, with ecclesiastical networks, in case of attack from without. If the Church could only realise that it must sometimes make mistakes, but that God can cor-

rect mistakes and even use them to His glory if the motive behind them be disinterested, then there would be an end of all this convention and timidity which dare not advance in case later it may have to retreat.

Christ demands in men, as in a Church, a constant enduring, courageous and adventurous attempt to obey the two simple words: "Follow Me." The duty of a Christian is to practise the art of living under Christ's direction in the hope that he may obtain an ever finer technique and perhaps one day unconsciously pass on the craft to others. It has been and always will be the experience of those who try to follow in incorruptness of living that they come to know more about God as they come to know more about Jesus Christ and the art of following Him. Since Jesus lived, God has been a nearer Being to man. To deepen the Christ-consciousness is to deepen the God-consciousness.

The religion of Jesus Christ demands, too, from an individual, as from a Church, that which all men and every Institution find it infinitely hard to surrender—the desire to lord it over others. The only privilege that Christ offers is the privilege of competition

in service, and the Christian doctrine of election is an election to service and not to privilege. " But whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

I think besides that Christ would wish us through direct contact with Himself to make a religion for ourselves, sitting first as we must at the feet of authority, the inevitable form under which education begins. Afterwards detachment is requisite for fuller truth, and we must find for ourselves in what way we may best express our Christian religion and through what Church, if any, we may be enabled to be most constant and unremitting in Christ-like living and service. I have a deep belief that for all men who live selflessly there is an orthodoxy which is not necessarily that which the professionally religious suggest, but which is actually the orthodoxy that is in the mind of God for them. But to attain this men must think.

What the individual and the Church both need is a new reality, and maybe before either

can get that both must go down into the darkness of reverent doubt—Christ is there; sometimes I think He is especially there. Perhaps both must pass through an infinity of chaos before the light shines again; that may be the only way in which a faith worth having is to be attained. We must seek not certainty but Truth. Men should be encouraged authoritatively by the Church not to stifle their doubts, but to face in all freedom and honesty what may prove for a time a painful process—the vocation to serve God with the mind.

In a poem called after Dante's "Great Refusal," Mr. Godfrey Bradby represents one friend pleading the comforting nature of orthodox doctrines to dissuade another from doubt. To this the doubter answers:

> "Yes, but supposing (since in things divine
> Contentment may not be the Pearl of Price)
> Yours was the Great Refusal, friend,
> And mine the Sacrifice."

Theological confusion is not to be mistaken for loss of faith. After all, it is not our grasp of Christ that matters but His grasp of us, and just as He is the Way so He always has been and always will be on the way, on every path which men in their several callings must

travel in the course of daily life. Moreover, as Mr. Middleton Murry has said: "After Jesus lived and died in it, the world was never the same again. A new and unknown spiritual energy entered into the process of human life. It is not exhausted; so far as one can see it never will be exhausted; and we, for our part, believe it is only now entering upon a phase of plenary power."

However decadent we may think the Altars of our forefathers, however far we may have gone from their faith, however frail our own poor belief, however weakened our trust in traditional religion, I yet believe that if we can keep our hold on moral values, in God's own time—though we may now be in the wilderness of doubt—we shall come back, because He will bring us back, not only to a faith in God, but even to a faith in Christ. When that happens it will not much matter what type of churchmanship we affect.

There is much that Christ has to give to those who respond to the severe demands that His religion makes, but I have not here been concerned with the benefits but with the obligations of Christian discipleship.

CHAPTER VII

FOLLOWING CHRIST

IN the last chapter I endeavoured to explain briefly what Christian discipleship entails for the individual. I want now to draw attention to certain values upon which our Lord set store, and to suggest that they must be applied without compromise to the Christian Institution as well as accepted by those who would endeavour to live according to the Spirit of Christ.

Doubtless the outstanding contribution which Jesus Christ made to religion was His belief in the goodness and availability of God, Who was to Him and to all men in the relationship of a Father. If our Lord revealed the divinity of man, He most certainly also revealed the humanity of God. He was obviously surprised and disappointed in His earthly pilgrimage to discover how reluctant men were to trust or to treat God as a Father. The first task that confronted Jesus Christ was that of liberating men from the fear of

God to which they were under bondage. He had to destroy the current conception of God as someone who needed perpetually to be propitiated and whose judgments were so capricious that no man could tell what they might be. Jesus Christ endeavoured to change men's idea of God from that of a task-master to that of a lover. He taught in effect that God was to be depended upon to come up to the best human expectations of what an ideal Father might be. It is surely not accidental that "Father" is the first word in the Lord's Prayer, and that it has also been handed down to us in the original—*Abba*. Yet Jesus Christ did not come with apologetics about God, He did not argue or even explain His teaching about Him; He lived it out like a skilled craftsman who creates beauty, and leaves the appreciation of it to those who have eyes to see. He knew that all men who had not forsworn their values must needs love the highest when they see it. Our Lord did not talk about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man in so many words, but He proceeded to live as if both were true, and He bade men try the experiment of living free from fear as if they were, as He said they

were, the sons of God and brothers one of another.

Now, this is the first obligation of those of us who would attempt Christianity. We have to accept the values of God which Jesus Christ proclaimed; to try to live as if they were true and to see, as I have already said, if they will work. The implications of this belief are terrific; indeed, so far they have been too great for our small hearts since they involve an attitude to God and to our neighbour which tests men almost beyond endurance. If once we ceased to argue about God and accepted Him as our Father, there would be nothing left except to obey Him—that is, to trust God and to trust mankind—and that is what the world will not and does not even wish to do.

For an individual to be involved in treating God as if He were a Father and his neighbour as if he were a brother is to exact from him every conceivable virtue that Christianity can demand. To love God and to love your neighbour as yourself is the beginning and end of the Christian religion. We have only to pause for a moment to think in what that

would involve us to realise how hard it is for men to be Christians and how much easier it is to make Christianity some sort of a philosophy rather than a definite commitment to a certain kind of life.

It must be remembered, too, that this doctrine of the Fatherhood of God demands in its disciples a method of approach to Him in public and private prayer from which every element of fear is necessarily banished. God is to be worshipped for what He is and not for favours to come: man is to be served in virtue of what he is and not in order that we may acquire merit—he is one with us in a family which knows no boundaries of race or colour, and over which the Father-God presides.

There can be no fear in the relationship of a son to a father except that kind of fear of hurting the ideal father, of which a son might well be conscious; nor can there be in the prayers of a Christian anything that suggests that God needs to be placated, or turned from His wrathful purposes lest He should punish His children eternally in a moment of ungovernable ill-temper. It were better to

declare the Throne of God empty than to set back upon it the tyrant God whom Jesus Christ dethroned. It is Christians and not Jesus who have made and still make God a punisher.

There can be no pages in the Christian's book of devotions that suggest the volcanic Jahveh, and nothing in man's approach to God which resembles that kind of grovelling self-abasement which is frequently recommended in many little books of devotion and conspicuous in many hymns we so delight to sing.

The heart of God must often be hurt by the sins and waywardness of His children, but surely His attitude towards them must be that of the shepherd who, leaving the ninety-nine safely within the fold, would gladly journey on to the mountain side in the hope that the one who had strayed might be persuaded to return. Our Lord told us that the return of one penitent increased the joy of Heaven. That was the most wonderful definition of God that man ever heard. Jesus Christ does not want men because He pities them, but because He loves them and because

the home circle cannot be complete if there is one vacant chair around the table. There is nothing weak in this great conception of God, for there is no love so powerful as the love of one who knows nothing of revenge and has denied himself the usage of those punishments which we, in our imperfect state, fancy to be necessary. Love which cannot use force without treason to its very nature is still universally regarded as the most powerful thing in the world.

And again, it is surely obvious that Jesus Christ looked upon Himself as one who was called to be a servant rather than a master. He humbled Himself, He took no pride in His position, He even refrained from asking men who He was until they had accompanied Him as men with a man.

There were only two virtues that our Lord claimed for Himself—meekness and humility —and these were not accounted virtues in His day. Yet what is more compelling? Jesus Christ would not have lived in men's hearts as He does had He claimed the jurisdiction of a Cæsar. Was there any appeal so wonderful or so unsuspectedly powerful as that which was made by the Babe of Bethlehem?

"They all were looking for a King
To slay their foes and set them high.
Thou cam'st a little baby thing
That made a woman cry."

Once a year there is still a hush in the world while men bring their gifts to the Infant, and those who have nothing in common and spend their life in antagonisms are at one for the moment around the cradle of the little Christ. Men speak different languages, but they all cry "Notre Père," "Unser Vater," "Our Father." I would rather see the Babe of Bethlehem, the token of the utter self-giving of God, than the beatific vision of a King coming on the clouds of Heaven surrounded by pomp and circumstances to mete out rewards and punishments.

It is impossible, too, to think of our Lord as desiring the highest place or competing for popular applause or for earthly prestige and power. He called a little band of people, not very intelligent, certainly not rich, just a little company of straightforward, literal, out-and-out sort of people, rugged, honest and according to their lights sincere. To their Master they must have been absurdly lovable. He

told them that His Kingdom was not of this world. He did not disguise from them, even if they disguised it from themselves, that toil and hardship and humble service would be their lot in this world, and that ultimately they would be brought under the shadow of a cross. I think that one of the hardest moments in the life of Christ must have been when even at His Supper His followers began to wrangle as to who should be the greatest.

At the beginning of His life work, when our Lord went into the wilderness to think out ways and means, He definitely decided that He could use no weapons approved of this world in the building up of His Kingdom. It was to be founded by Love and upon Love, and nothing else. Unfortunately, all sorts of meanings that vary between lust and amiability have attached themselves to that much overworked word, but it needs little study of the Gospels to discover that the love which Christ lived by and recommended had nothing whatsoever to do with selfishness, sentiment, or emotionalism, but was a virtue exceeding in power any that the world knows, which burnt in Him like a flame, and which

was capable of destroying everything mean and poor as a prairie fire consumes everything that stands in its way.

We must face the fact that Christianity implies complete self-giving and the winning of men by love and by nothing else, and that fear, superstition and magic have no lot or part in it according to the mind of its Founder.

I am afraid that however much we may desire to avoid a difficult situation, it is impossible to escape the fact that the principles contained in the Sermon on the Mount are the actual marching orders for a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Alas, that they have never yet been tried, at least by the Christian Institution.

Until August of 1914 it was our habit to admire the moral standards contained in that Sermon, but to laugh at the few people who were foolish enough to say that they were the standards not only which Christ ordained, but which the world must live by if it would save both its soul and its body. We excused ourselves from obeying the teaching of Christ by suggesting that however admirable were

His precepts, they were entirely unpractical—a world could not be run on His lines. Did not all our great people tell us so, if they did not say so in as many words, at least they based all their advice and legislation on standards that were a direct negation of Christ's teaching? And what has happened? Has the Galilean proved a false prophet, or have we who claim to be Christians not only been false to His teaching but false to the best interests of our world? Granted the Way of Christ is incredibly difficult, is it not possible that it is a more hopeful way than the way down which the prominent people would direct us and which, as a matter of fact, under their guidance has involved us in living within an extraordinarily uncomfortable world that goes bumping, like something out of control, from the edge of one catastrophe to the edge of another?

To retrace our steps not so much back as up to Christ and to give His counsel that chance which it has never yet had is the task of those who in this generation have the courage to advocate Christianity. The Churches must commit themselves body and soul to this

adventure, or confess their apostasy and become mere refuges for those who desire to escape from contact with actual life.

And there is a further consideration. It is unthinkable from what we know of Jesus Christ that He could have any quarrel with thoughtful and reverently-minded men who had not attained to a stage at which they could accept traditional orthodoxy, or who, knowing the weakness of their own poor efforts after betterment, dared not promise over much. Is it conceivable, for instance, that our Lord could address an intellectually bewildered candidate for service as follows: "Before you can fully enter My company and serve My cause, I must know how you regard My Mother," or that He who knew so surely what was in the heart of man could say to a soul who was looking back in longing to the lights of the Father's Home: "Because you have committed this sin, I cannot welcome you back until you promise that never again will you commit a similar offence or journey into the far country"? Jesus Christ once said that the wheat and the chaff must grow together until the harvest; and woe betide those of us who would anticipate the Day of Judg-

ment with our acid tests, either intellectual or moral.

Our Lord, too, most certainly valued the enthusiasm of the adventurous, of whom He welcomed several to His little company. His Spirit is directly opposed to the characteristic vice of modern Christianity—insipidity. I think Jesus Christ loved the Sons of Thunder even while He restrained their impetuous desires. It is difficult, indeed, for an unbiased reader of the Gospels to know whether Jesus Christ was not a great deal more in favour of taking the Kingdom of God by storm than His biographers allow. Certainly it is the violent—" those who knock until the whole house resounds to the knocking "—who are admitted. Undoubtedly Jesus was a " constructive revolutionary " and a most uncompromising destroyer of all that was decadent and hurtful to the soul of man. He had not that respect for the " religious susceptibilities of the faithful " which we are frequently told to cultivate. He was never afraid of shocking. To the best of our knowledge He did not rebuke the disciples for crumbling the corn in their hands as they passed through the cornfield, though in all probability it was

very upsetting to the orthodox. Perhaps Jesus Christ wished to shock because He knew that only so could He raise vital issues and make men think. Most assuredly He valued the passionate. Mr. Clutton Brock (from whose study this manuscript is being sent to the printers) once said: "Jesus Christ seems to affirm that only through passion can we attain to wisdom, and in Him wisdom forgot its dull dignity and became passionate. He seems to tell men to live with the creative freedom of a great artist, the freedom that comes of mastery in the expression, not in the refusal of passion."

To reduce Christianity to the level of a religion of mere good form is to secularise it and to take from it both its appeal and its power. At the moment the witness of the Churches is eminently undistinguished, and as a consequence it is not so much disliked as discounted.

No one expects professing Christians to be different from other people. They are no doubt excellent people in their way, but they are just like everybody else. They accept the same standards, values and ideals. They are ready to support their country, right or wrong

—indeed, a Churchman would be thought a dangerous person who said in a moment of national crisis that he was first a Christian and only after that an Englishman. They are ready to kill members of other nations if the Government of the day bids them do so. It is true that they think civil war a terrible thing, but if all men are brethren is there in the mind of Christ a distinction between an Englishman killing an Englishman and an Englishman killing a Chinaman?

And there is no getting away from the fact that a vast number of our social ills are permitted solely because professing Christians have never yet placed the horror of them on their conscience. They are willing to help the dispossessed, but rather shocked if they want to help themselves. They do not believe the poor are destined for the workhouse, but they do believe that they are destined to remain dreadfully poor. There are certain injustices in our social fabric which could be remedied within a short space of time if Christians definitely said "these things shall not be." There are evils besides, too dreadful to talk about but not apparently too dreadful to forget. "The great cruelty of the Eng-

lish," said a Swiss writer—Muralt—" lies in permitting evil rather than in doing it."

The clearest call of Jesus Christ to the individual is unquestionably the call to sacrifice. It is impossible to escape the conviction that Christ asks us to act as if we hardly counted if by so acting we can assist our brethren. Surely He was the most radiant man of His day in Galilee. His life was a life made intensely happy, but made happy not by acquisitions which we have come to think make for happiness, but by perpetual self-giving.

Our Lord all through His life seems to have shown the joy that resulted from the giving of almost everything He possessed. May not this be applied to spiritual possessions? Is it not possible for a Church as well as an individual to be choked even with spiritual riches just as completely as with material? The sorrow that our Lord expressed at the sight of the rich young man was not, I think, because of what he possessed so much as because his possessions separated him from his fellowmen. Has this no message for the Christian Institution?

It was once said by a mystic that man first fell not when he ate an apple but when he

said, "Me, My, Mine"; when, that is to say, he desired something for his own exclusive use. It was not the possession of wealth but the attachment to it that Christ denounced. Jesus Christ seemed to bid people find out how little they really required and to recognise that there was a power to possess which had nothing to do with the legal right to the thing possessed. "As having nothing, yet possessing all things," is perhaps the secret of Christian discipleship.

A man who possesses great things does not enjoy them so much as the possession of them. For His work on earth, Jesus needed nothing except His intuitive knowledge of God and His love for men. Money, learning, tracts, pamphlets, literature, testimonials from people in high office—all these would have handicapped and not helped.

For those who desire to commend Christ there is almost nothing that is essential except the power of communion with God which men call prayer, a faith in God that is straightforwardly simple and childlike, and a knowledge of what is in the heart of man, which may belong to anyone who knows that he himself is a sinner. I do not believe that

a Christian who wishes to make his faith real needs anything except Christ's understanding of God, a mind that is not afraid to think, and a love of the brethren which comes from his knowledge of how he himself needs a Saviour. I am sure, too, that if we did but know it, this sacrificial life which Christianity requires is the ideally happy life. No greater disservice has ever been done to religion than by those who have suggested that Christ's demand for sacrifice would entail sorrow and gloom.

"Christianity," writes Dr. Jacks, "is the most encouraging, the most joyous, the least repressive and the least forbidding of all the religions of mankind. There is no religion that gives so large a scope for the high spirits of the soul. . . . There are moments when it enters the deepest shadows and may even be said to descend into hell. But the end of it all is a Resurrection and not a funeral, an ascent into the heights and not a lingering in the depths."

And there is no doubt whatsoever that Jesus Christ was amazingly human in His dealings with people. While sinners must have feared His white-hot purity they seemed to want to

be with Him and not to be afraid of Him with that kind of fear with which the clergy and church-workers are so frequently regarded. We live our Christianity too heavily. I know no better way of expressing what I mean than by the words which were spoken by an old lady at the poor end of a parish, who said she did not want the church-worker coming round saving her soul on her.

Truly there was joy in the presence of Jesus Christ. We need to picture Him genially. While there is nothing more distressing than that type of "official love" which is sometimes served out by religious people and which deceives no one, since it does not and cannot ring true, yet in a hundred ways human love must be the inspiration through which a disciple makes his Master known. There is that in the Gospel which is akin to the welcoming light in a cottage window on a dark night.

I think that one of the reasons why the churches are as empty as they are is because the people are perfectly aware that the clergy and church officials who are responsible for them do not really care for those committed to their charge—they love their "souls";

they do not love them. There is no human touch. Our Lord was never so divine or so appealing as when He was human. The traditions about Jesus contain nothing more certain than that His message was an "Evangel," and that it was meant and felt to bring joy and blessing. Such values stand out in the New Testament for all who read to see.

The time has come when our countrymen must say whether they desire Christianity to prevail or whether they must frankly confess that it is too hard a way. Those of us who now sing the Magnificat—so much more revolutionary than "The Red Flag"—must decide whether we are going to continue lip service with little to follow, or whether there may not possibly be a little less lip service and a little more of the vital Christianity of Jesus Christ.

I wonder what the world of thoughtful people in the East, watching Christianity, can think of us to whom it has been taught to look for the practical example of the faith of Christ? I wonder how we must appear to those who watch us and hear us making our brave assertions about the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and our personal de-

votion to the Lord Christ. I wonder if we do not seem to them like Alpine climbers who, having greased their faces and covered them with masks, and having put on their nailed boots and taken ice-axes in their hands, then proceed to walk gravely up the mild heights of Ludgate Hill? The contrast between our profession and our achievement would be ludicrous if it were not so utterly pathetic.

I want a disturbance, I want almost anything rather than an unchallenged continuation of these smothered institutional versions of the fire which Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth. I confess that if England definitely said that she could not face Christianity, I should feel that there was no hope, though I know Christ's religion would be born again in the hearts of men and women elsewhere, but we should at least know where we stood.

Perhaps the thing that worries me most is that I find those leaders of Christianity who some years ago I knew to be as fully conscious of the situation as they are more fully equipped to deal with it than I am, tamed out of recognition, not only by high office, but by the cares and pettinesses with which

their ecclesiastical life is surrounded. I find them now flying about from Committee to Committee, so intent on little matters of domestic concern and the defence of a parochial area of religion that I am sometimes forced to wonder whether in their heart of hearts they are not attempting to drown their conscience, which bids them forget denominational loyalties and concentrate on the far vaster issues which confront the very existence of Christianity. Why are these able and good people not more explicitly revolutionary and discontented?

The question is not whether men and women are going to join this or that Church, nor in what form this or that denomination is to survive; but whether Christianity is to live as a dynamic force for the salvation of the world, or merely to exist as a quiet and moderating influence. I am not here finding fault with those leaders who are either frankly satisfied, or wholly Erastian (they are at least consistent and consistency is to be respected), but I *am* critical of those who used not to hesitate to express their concern but who now no longer seem interested except in the little affairs of their own denomination.

The leaders of Christendom might well remember that for those few whom they hear about, who are scandalised by plain speaking, there are many more whom they do not hear about who are scandalised by the lack of it.

CHAPTER VIII

AS HAVING NOTHING

IN pursuance of the axiom that a Church cannot be corporately less Christian than an individual disciple, some outstanding values of Jesus Christ, emphasised in the last chapter, must now be related to the Christian Institution.

It will be remembered that it was there suggested that the greatest contribution that Jesus Christ made to religion was not, as is nowadays so often implied, His kindness to the individual—gracious as that most certainly was—but the belief on which He based His life, that God was as the ideal and perfect father. If the Church is ready to accept and not merely to acclaim that belief, it must obviously re-write much of its literature and re-state a good many of its present beliefs. There is no doubt that the Church of England does not whole-heartedly presuppose or teach the Fatherhood and Love of God. Time upon time, in its Prayer Book there are

references to a God who can in no wise be identified with the Father of Jesus Christ. God is often represented not only as extremely capricious, but as capable of the kind of anger which could not be identified even with a perfect human father.

The very doctrine of an enduring hell is a negation of the Fatherhood of God, for it is unthinkable that any lover of men could consent to punish eternally a single one of his children, however gross and grave had been his moral failure. Of course, a father must deal justly with an erring son, and a son who was worth anything would desire to make reparation for wrongdoing and for grieving the father's heart. "Father, I have sinned . . . make me as one of thy hired servants," is the natural expression of penitence from a son who has not lost his sense of what is right and fitting. "Repentant tears," said Samuel Butler, the earlier, "are the waters on which the Spirit of God moves." But the doctrine of hell, which has been emphasised in order that men might be dragooned into the way of righteousness or kept in subjection to the Church, is wholly alien to Christ's conception of God and it cannot any longer be en-

tertained by those who proclaim Him as a loving Father. No father ever won the love of his children by threatening them with punishments that were cruelly in excess of their deserts.

It is impossible not to feel the force of the famous protest of John Stuart Mill: "I will call no Being good, who is not what I mean by good when I apply the word to my fellow creatures." If I think of those I know as not yet worthy of eternal bliss, I still think of them as certainly not worthy of eternal damnation. We gratefully remember that great contribution to morality, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," which was on the lips of the dying Saviour Who revealed God; and it is unthinkable that He who so cried from His Cross could be capable of eternal displeasure.

How is it conceivable that any man could covet Heaven for himself if it is likely that those he loves may be eternally refused admission? Am I singular in admitting that Heaven would be hell for me unless they were with me? I would rather descend into the abyss to be by their side than enjoy the reward of a Heaven offered to me by someone

who was purposing to exclude my fellows from all possibility of ultimate happiness.

No doubt many a soul may be and will be unfit for a time to enter into happiness, unfit possibly even to recognise Heaven; no doubt men will need to go through a time of cleansing before they can hope to attain to eternal bliss. But if we think of God in terms of Jesus Christ, surely we cannot doubt that ultimately all men will be destined to share in the joy of the Father's Home. We can believe this and yet fear mightily the Day of Judgment when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. There is nothing that I fear more than the look of sorrowful disappointment that assuredly must come into the eyes of my Lord when at that hour He looks upon me and says, as indeed He may, "Not yet, My son."

It seems to me that every Christian Church must recognise that a hell of eternal punishment is not compatible with Christianity, and that it must alter radically that part of its teaching which gives colour to the idea that the Christian God can be permanently angry with and unforgiving towards His children. In the words of George Tyrrell: "The old

God must be pulverised before the new can reveal Himself to us." If we pause to think what the full acceptance of the Fatherhood of God would entail in alteration even in the New Prayer Book, we shall realise the tremendous revolution in thought and expression that will be essential before the Church of England fully preaches and teaches the Love of God.

And, just as it is impossible to think of a Christian disciple who was living in the spirit of his Lord caring for position, worldly esteem and honour, so surely there should be nothing more sincerely humble than the attitude of a Christian Church. It cannot desire for itself any excess of worldly importance or intellectual wisdom denied to others, or endowment of any kind which separates it from contact with ordinary people and prevents it being the lowliest and most unostentatious instrument of service. We suffer terribly to-day from Churches that are competing for pride of place with the kingdoms of this world, and from an academic Christianity which makes the religion of our Lord unlovely and incomprehensible to ordinary folk.

"I am among you as he that serveth," sum-

marised much of Christ's teaching. Is the Church to work out its destiny and to witness to its Lord on easier terms? Jesus Christ was not a king playing at being a carpenter, but an actual carpenter. We have done Him grave dis-service, even in art, by that perpetual halo that we have placed round His head. We meant well; we intended to give Him status and prestige; instead we have limited His appeal by removing Him from actual life. Men want to approach the divinely human carpenter at his workmen's bench; they fear and even distrust the make-belief carpenter with His halo. The Christian Institution must be as radiantly simple and as barren of worldly dignity as was its Founder.

And need we turn His every spontaneous word into an edict, and make such heavy-handed and pompous business of His exquisite and simple human wisdom? That wisdom only becomes divine when we permit it to be free and untrammelled, like the wind that cometh we know not whence, and goeth we know not whither. Does Jesus Christ want all this dignity that we insist upon attaching to Him? If only we would offer Him free to the people, they would soon know

that He was more than man; there would be no fear of their treating Him with disrespect. They would also know Him as the Master of the craft and art of actual living.

Often while we mean well we serve Christ badly by according Him a position and prestige which somehow suggests that He never was a real man; that He never was up against things as we are; that He never passed our way. So ordinary men who live in the Fulham Road and elsewhere cry in despair: "What has he to do with me?" and they turn sorrowfully away. And yet God alone knows how much they need a saviour and how they would welcome Jesus Christ as such if they could but meet Him as He is.

I can more easily see our Lord sweeping the streets of London than issuing edicts from its cathedral. His life was of that kind which does not want to speak about brotherhood from a platform, but wants to move in and out amongst men, loving where He was permitted to love. Jesus raised the dead to stay a woman's tears. I always fancy that when our Lord was on earth, the more foolish the chatter around Him, the more divine would have been His speech; just like a strolling

minstrel of genius will sometimes give of his best to a noisy and inattentive crowd. Our Lord's love was of that kind which did beautiful things that nobody else even saw needed doing. He was a man of the people and had no desire for aggrandisement, a Carpenter Who might have made His own cross. He often repressed His claims lest He should prejudice the judgment of men, and one of the griefs of His life must have been that even His disciples could think that earthly reward and increase of status would be the lot of those who enrolled in His cause.

There is no warrant whatsoever in the Gospels for a Church that claims divine dignity, nor for an exclusive Christian Institution that is built on traditions which do violence to simplicity and homeliness. I cannot see how it is possible for any Christian Church to desire for itself prestige, status and position, and a wealth of subtle intellectual formulæ that must necessarily baffle just the type that once heard Christ so gladly. I cannot understand either how the leaders of Christendom can tolerate titles of aggrandisement, as, for instance, "my lord," that relate them to the great ones of this world. Nowadays even Rural Deans like R.D. after their names.

Somehow the appealing simplicity of the Gospel has been mislaid and with it has gone much of the original radiance. We have complicated Christ's teaching and rounded it off intellectually, doubtless with a pardonable desire to express it neatly and to commend it to the intellectuals, but I wonder if much has not been lost in the process. After all, the glory of the unedited Gospel was that while all men might understand it, the clever could still never exhaust its meaning. In one sense the Gospel is simplicity itself; Jesus Christ thought that no one could understand it half as well as a child.

Organised Christianity has become a terrific affair of frowning fortresses, vested interests and intellectual statements: a simple man has to work hard to find the Christ at its heart. Truly, as someone has said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him" is the outstanding cry of many thoughtful people to-day. Strange as it may sound, I am hopeful about organic Christianity, mainly because I believe there are multitudes to-day within its borders who desire to leave their Churches temporarily that they may find in the open air outside

not so much a creed as a Christ. It is these people who can recapture the soul of the Gospel and bring back to the Churches the lost radiance of the Christian faith.

And again, surely it is impossible for any Church to take certain words of our Lord and turn them into laws, while it refrains from taking notice of other sayings which to Him may have been of equal if not of greater import. "A Church," says a recent writer, "which makes laws out of the sayings of Christ must find itself in difficulty. Either it must expel any member who does not obey all those laws, in which case it will soon have no members, or else it must choose among them and be open to the reproach of choosing to suit its own convenience." A Church ceases to be Christian the moment it begins to judge mankind either intellectually or morally. How is it possible to make judgments about our fellows on our necessarily imperfect knowledge; and if adequate judgments are to be made, who shall survive the test? The Church must offer its gifts free to all who reverently ask for them and are able to say: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

If the Christian Society is in the world for the saving of mankind, then everything in the nature of excommunication must be anathema to its Lord, and the only excommunication which may be permitted is that which a man may pass upon himself. I would have the Christian Altars "fenced" around, but the fencing should be the conscience of the individual, and not the partially informed judgments of some ecclesiastical authority.

As things are to-day, any man who is willing to accept credal statements, even though he may not have given them five minutes' thought, is acceptable, but an honest and thoughtful man, who has gone into the depths in his search for a living faith and has come out believing in Christ but unable to believe some theological amplifications about Him, is unfit, officially at least, for full membership in the Catholic Church. To say that while this is actually true in theory yet these things are winked at in practice, is to confess that the Church is dishonest and guilty of creating dishonest thinkers.

Why all this passion for precision? The bitter tests which we like to apply prove a veritable sentence of death upon the imma-

ture but promising belief of many a would-be Christian. We say to him in effect, "all or nothing," and because he is honest he feels obliged to return the whole, though he may be seriously anxious to cherish the vital heart of the Christian faith and to be at one with us in Christian service. All this is so monstrous that if it had not become second nature to us to accept it we should rise in revolt at a state of things which so limits and confuses the appeal of the Founder of Christianity. After all, in our Lord's account of the judgment of men, active beneficence is made the one and only test—those who have fed the hungry are accepted; those who have not done so are rejected. While we must not make Christianity a religion of mere amiability we cannot leave this significant fact out of our reckoning.

A Church might well confess that its hallowed creeds were, after all, only the best that it could do, and welcome unconditionally into its wide embrace all men who desire to follow Christ as the Lord of all good life, offering them the full hospitality of God, in so far as it can, and engaging them for the adventure of Christ-like living and an honest

search for fuller Christian truth. The late Mr. Clutton Brock once appealed to the Churches with these memorable words: "Will no Church, will not the Church of England, ever dare to affirm that it is a Church just because it has no status, no laws, no morality, no power of judgment, but only a common desire to know and to love God? The Church that first makes that affirmation will draw men to it as no Church has ever done." To which, with my whole soul, I cry Amen.

And here I must speak where wiser men might feel it advisable to hold their peace. What is the one great rock on which every modern desire for an increase of Christian charity and comprehensiveness dashes itself in vain? Undoubtedly it is the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession—the idea that no Church can be thought to have any true existence unless its officers can trace their authority, by a direct ceremonial transmission through the laying on of hands, to Apostolic times. "Sacraments administered by others than these have only a doubtful and conditional value; they are irregular, and their spiritual value depends merely upon the mercy

of God, Who may be expected not to allow schismatics and heathen to suffer from their mistakes and ignorance, provided they occur in good faith." * This is the greatest of all barriers to reunion.

Now, is the Anglican Communion, with which I am mainly concerned—whose claims, by the way, in this respect are denied by the Church of Rome—indeed is any Church justified in maintaining a doctrine that has nothing whatsoever to do with the formation of character and the fostering of virtue; that invalidates the ministry of many Christ-like men whose work has been obviously blessed by God; and that makes it impossible for Christians to meet together at the one ceremony of our Lord's institution which is called, not in cynicism but in honest reverence, "the blessed Sacrament of Unity"? The historical proof for this doctrine is so slender that it cannot be accepted as proven except by those who have a strong predisposition to receive it.

"It is a fact almost incredible," writes Mr.

* I am indebted to Mr. Harold Anson for much that I have said on this question, though I may not assume that he would share my conclusions.

Anson, "and one which those unacquainted with the life of the Church will hardly believe, that a number of people are being taught to-day on the authority of texts (from the concluding chapter of St. Matthew, and St. John xx) that our Lord constituted an unalterable ministry, and that we cannot with any certainty obtain the benefits of His presence and spiritual sustenance, or the forgiveness of sins, apart from it, and that no body of Christians can claim to be a Church which cannot thus trace back the pedigree of its ministers to that original fount, and such people never seem to have been told by their teachers that the texts can be otherwise interpreted.

We should also do well to remember that the Apostle *par excellence*—the man to whom ancient and modern theologians refer habitually as *the* Apostle—owed nothing officially to his brother apostles. His office came direct by a mystical consecration to Christ's work.

From what we know of Christ can we imagine Him entrusting the carrying on of His ideas to a committee with the sole right to interpret His views for all time so that no other body might claim any spiritual succes-

sion from Him except those who could show their Letters Patent from the original committee? Is it possible either in fact or in theory to claim Jesus Christ as a witness for the necessity of the Apostolic Succession?

Whatever our personal predilections grave indeed is our responsibility if we permit a doctrine, so debatable * to separate those whom, in virtue of their love for Christ, God has joined together and whom in consequence no man has the right to put asunder. Is it not high time that we gratefully acknowledged that any Christian Society which brings men into vital fellowship with the Spirit of Christ is a true Church and lacks no credentials that a true Church requires? If we will acknowledge this, we remove by far the greatest barrier to the Reunion of Christendom.

In 1691, Richard Baxter thus addressed the Anglicans from whom he had separated: "Oh, how little would it have cost you Churchmen in 1660 and 1661 to have prevented the calamitous and dangerous divisions of this land and the common danger thereby, and the hurt that many thousand souls have

* Perhaps the most acute intellect in Church or State to-day has referred to this doctrine as a "mere legend."

received by it. And how little would it cost you yet to prevent a continuance of it." These words remain still tragically true.

I am persuaded that it is the path both of wisdom and charity for the Anglican Communion without delay to confess authoritatively that while it still holds to its belief that Episcopal government is desirable for the Society of Jesus Christ, it no longer requires the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession to be thought of as divinely ordained or essential for a Christian Church. Let the greatest possible liberty be given for divergent conceptions of the Ministry and of the Apostolic Succession. An authoritative statement to this effect might herald in a revival of religion such as, at the moment, we can scarcely contemplate.

When Professor Barry was recently asked what constituted a true Church, he answered: "No archæological study can say; only its present work and future aim." Cannot we frankly admit this truth? Moreover, as George Tyrrell wrote: "There is a priesthood whose value neither clerical nor anti-clerical can undermine or obscure; this is the eternal priesthood of those whose destiny it is to be

the servants of humanity in its search for the higher meaning of life."

And let me say one word here about those who are set apart for the Ministry. I am sure that the ministers of every Church must reconsider the task to which they have been called. It seems to me that we should deem ourselves as mere servants in the House of God, whose lot it is to keep ourselves by prayer and study as alive unto God as we can; to be ready at all times to be of service to our fellow men, and to give them as reverently and as beautifully as we may their meat in due season. Our profession is not necessarily "sacred." It is dangerous to the last degree to suggest that work that is connected with sacred things must in itself be sacred.

Let it be definitely conceded that there is nothing magical about the work of a clergyman, and that his blessing is of no greater value than would be the blessing of his mother. The minister's effectiveness is proportionate to his goodness, and it is by his character primarily and not in virtue of his commission that he can win men to Christ. Any idea that the round collar is a slipped halo, any attempt on the part of the priest to

demand an irrational submission, or to treat them as if he were a drill sergeant and they an awkward platoon, must be once and for all abandoned. Unfortunately one of man's chief weaknesses is his desire to be excused from thought in matters of religion and led blindfold by his priest, who too often has consented to trade upon this human infirmity. A characteristic trait of little men is their love to become dictators.

An ecclesiastical civilisation in the mediæval sense will never be known again, and, indeed, there is probably nothing worse for men than to be governed by their priests. The world is passing out of clerical control and I, for one, do not bemoan the fact. The docile people as a rule are the failures and not the successes of the clergy. The ideal of a dragooned uniformity of spiritual practice, worship and belief is a temptation which the clergy must resist.

And I cannot see how any Christian Church that is taking for itself the standards which an individual Christian is bound to accept can consent to be as respectably tamed and wedded to convention as are the Churches to-day. If they have lost the hearts of the

people, it is largely because the people know perfectly well that those special virtues which they identify with Jesus Christ are not prominent in the Institutions that are called after His Name.

The Churches as a rule can be counted upon to support all that the State suggests; they are hypnotised at moments of crisis just as is the Nation. The State can never move far ahead of the average morality of its citizens, but the Church if it is to express the mind of Christ must always be ahead of public opinion and average morality. Let the cleavage between the Church and the world appear in the Church's ordering of its own life on lines always in advance of humanity.

It has been said that there was a time when the Church was like a torch going before the human race in its march through history showing it the way, but that now it is like an ambulance in the rear, whose main function is to pick up the wounded. Undoubtedly, this work of mercy is Christ-like and essential, but it is not the main function of a Church. Its main function is to worship and declare God and to prophesy: the Word of God is always in advance of current opinion.

When has a Church in recent years definitely dissociated itself from State pronouncements that were less than Christian? When has it rebuked the world not by mere denunciation but by a demonstration within its own borders of other-worldly standards? It is true that the Church is vastly better than it used to be, but what, for instance, is its attitude now about war during these years of peace? If war broke out again to-morrow, the Churches would be just where they were in August of 1914. They still have no mind on the subject. The Christian Institution should not leave outside organisations like C.O.P.E.C. to do its thinking for it. It should wage a great campaign to end all war before the rumblings of a fresh war are heard on the horizon, and it should wage that campaign solely and simply because Jesus Christ cannot be identified with the bestial brutalities that war produces at the Home Base as well as at the Front.

In every department of living, the Churches should stand above suspicion in their own acceptance of Christ-like standards until the hearts of men are recaptured again for the Lord Christ, not because the Churches have

made themselves "popular" or led popular causes, but because they have fearlessly preached the Word of God, and themselves shown the witness of countless of their followers who are practising what they preach. "There can be no question," writes Bishop Gore, "that our Lord intended His Church to make its appeal to the world mainly by the life which men saw it living." The Christian Institution is in the world not to dispute nor to denounce but to demonstrate.

And ought not my own Church, the Church of England, definitely to demand its freedom from the State, not only that thereby it may be truer by freedom to Christ's ideals, but that it may not be separated from any other Church by prestige and privilege? Why should not the Church of England ask for its own disestablishment, even if disendowment be involved, and yet demand that Christianity through the services of every Christian denomination should remain acknowledged as the religion of England?

If only our leading ecclesiastics were not so often the safe people! The so-called adventures that they call us to are sometimes the last word in futility in an age such as

ours. Recently, I saw in a diocesan magazine an article by a well-known Bishop which was entitled, "A Great Adventure." Here, I thought there might at last be some call to something less ordinary than the usual summonses which we are accustomed to receive from episcopal authority, but I found that the adventure was nothing more than that each parish in the diocese should attempt to raise a certain sum of money so that the diocese might be more effectively administered. At the root of our trouble lies the fact that the leaders of the Churches do not know the difference between a pitched battle and an affair of outposts.

I do not think that any Christian Church can be true to Christ to-day, unless it is prepared to make a vast sacrifice of those things that are not vital to its soul and of values which cannot be identified with those of its Lord. I believe that every Church is suffering to-day from an excess of things for which it has no real need and which is gravely crippling its witness in the world and causing its presentation of Christ to be quite paralysingly unreal to ordinary people. Lazarus at the Gate of Dives is not more pathetic than an

East End boy—or, for that matter, a boy from Eton—in the gallery of an ecclesiastical assembly. Is it not conceivable that if Christ were sitting by the side of those boys He might say, as He listened hour by hour to what He would be obliged to hear: "If this be Christianity, then I am not a Christian"?

The time has come for every Church—and my whole soul longs for my own Anglican Communion and especially that branch of it which is established in England to lead the way—to consider not what it can obtain for itself, but what it can do without and what it should cast out of its life as being a hindrance and not a help to its work. If Christians would once meet on a basis of sacrifice, there would soon be a renewal of Christianity, and it would not be long before it was borne in upon their hearts how intolerable, how disastrous, how unchristian, and indeed how suicidal are the barriers that are now suffered to divide them.

To return for one moment to something that has already been alluded to: how well we realise that there can be no peace in the world until each Nation—beginning with the greatest even unto the least—has made some

outstanding and significant sacrifice for the welfare of all. Does not that truth apply with equal urgency to the varied expressions of Christianity to-day which so confuse mankind and crucify Christ afresh before the people?

If there were only all round a little more of the Love that was in Christ Jesus, a little more readiness to make the Institution less inhuman, and perhaps a little more humour, that salt for want of which so many corruptions have been suffered to creep into religion, mighty things would soon come to pass.

Perhaps with regard to my own Church those mighty things would begin to happen almost at once if we were less fearful of criticism from Church people. Why, for instance, is the displeasure of the *Church Times* so much dreaded? For myself I admire its consistency and courage, but usually I cannot help deploring its ecclesiastical views. Is it impossible for prominent Anglicans to encourage themselves sometimes to brave criticism in its columns by remembering how few after all there are who think with the *Church Times,* and how many fewer still who ever thought for themselves before

or after it became to them their infallible guide? No leader can be really serviceable to the renewal of vital Christianity who is afraid of the opinion of the Press or of what has been called "the offensive labels culled from the rich vocabulary of theological vituperation."

CHAPTER IX

AS OTHERS SEE US

I AM not interested in suggesting the outlines of a Church that would be what is called "popular." I do not believe in popular religion, nor in what Bishop Neville Talbot, during the war, called "the holy grocery business" of Christianity, and Baron von Hügel "the error of Tommyism"; but I do believe that if organised Christianity is to be according to the mind of Christ, it must take a new form and emphasis before those who care passionately for righteousness can be expected to attach themselves gladly to it. At the moment, as has been said, the more virile men and women are not interested in the works of Institutional Religion. They still haunt the aisles of the Churches, especially around the Festivals, but even if they escape the Athanasian Creed they are strangely disappointed with what they find.

At the beginning of the war there was a vast ecclesiastical hullabaloo at the condition of

Christianity, but since then a reaction has set in and now, although almost nothing has been done to make the presentation of the Christian faith more real, it is not considered good form in Church circles to be critical. Perhaps there is nothing the ecclesiastically-minded need more than to see the Churches as they are, and not merely as they wish to see them.

We are fond of giving the point of view of the man in the street, which we generally hasten to add is of course not our own, but though we shall not go to him to ask what we ought to do, we shall do well to listen to what he has to say. I am sometimes inclined to believe that his judgments may be more Christian than are those of the religious expert.

Now what has our friend to say? Firstly, he cannot understand why each Church should not be loyal to its own beliefs and yet wholly tolerant of every other Church. It seems to him incontrovertible that there are as many ways of approach to God as there are reverent points of view, and he cannot understand why every Church should not recognise this fact and do what it can to encourage the neighbouring Church, even though it be of

another denomination, to go full steam ahead with its own people and in its own way. Why, he says, should not every Church be right so far as it goes, and why should there not be some concordat between all the Churches by means of which each could gladly recognise the good work of the other, and wish it luck in the Name of the Lord? Christ must surely be greater than any section of His followers have apprehended. This is no demand for uniformity but for unity of spirit in the bond of peace, although of course the man in the street does not use an expression like this.

If men think at all, they are bound to think differently, and what are called our "unhappy divisions" are only unhappy when they lead to hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. Surely men can belong to different Churches and recite different creeds and yet, thank God, be singularly like-minded. As things are now I can perfectly understand the decision of a thoughtful man to have no lot or part in any Church that would require him to be contemptuous of another or in active opposition to those who are seeking and finding God by some other road. In the

Churches as in the Nations we have to learn that we can love our own fellowship without condemning the fellowship of others. Intolerance has had a very successful career and it looks like having a brilliant future but it has nothing to contribute to Christianity.

Until the Churches have enlarged their outlook, and have decided to remove the barriers that deny to members of other Churches, who are wholly devoted to Christ, the right of free entry and the privilege of full communion I cannot see how they can expect to be stamped with the imprimatur either of God's approval or of man's enthusiasm.

It was said that after the war, eighty per cent. of demobilised men and women, indeed of the nation itself, visited their local church or chapel to listen to its appeal, for the need of religion was very real. How many remained? Not a great number, I fear; and that in spite of the multitude of missions and evangelistic efforts of every kind that were put in hand, and that met in the first instance with immediate success. Where are all those who were at that time willing to come to the churches and to give their message a hearing? Certainly they are not within organised reli-

gion to-day. Is it entirely their fault? Of course ordinary people are in a measure to blame, but is there not something to be said for their plea that they found what was offered to them bore little relationship either to Jesus Christ or to their own actual needs? They heard so much that seemed curiously unimportant and unreal; so little that had any bearing on the lives they had to live and the problems with which they were confronted. For the most part they dropped away and not always gladly but sometimes with a very real sorrow.

They were not fully equipped to say what was wrong but they were conscious that their church or chapel had no compelling message for them; it left them singularly cold. There was little that was strong or human or radiant in what they heard, and somehow they got the impression that they were primarily required to make regular Communions, or to attend a number of meetings rather than to fight for Christian principles in the rough and tumble of everyday life. They were asked, too, to join little parochial organisations which were of no real interest to them, and they were introduced to controversies which

they had never heard of before, and about which they could not enthuse because it did not seem to them that the cause of righteousness would be advanced whichever side won. How often did they hear that Christianity was merely a matter of following Christ in incorruptness of living? How many heard a sermon on the need of seeking Truth for truth's sake and how many came away from church or chapel realising that truth, beauty and goodness were essentials of Christianity, and that the ceremonies of the Church were, so to speak, not ends in themselves but helps and encouragements for those who were trying in their work-a-day life to be Christian? Frankly too the Church seemed to them amazingly inhuman. If proof of that be needed, let it be remembered that for nearly three hundred years the clergy have been content, without serious protest, to offer men those amazingly inhuman Occasional Offices,* which Authority suggested were adequate for moments when men and women were more than usually sensitive to spiritual influences.

Yet no new Gospel is needed but only the

* Among the Occasional Offices are the forms of service for weddings, funerals and the churching of women.

old one related to Jesus and to life. We still hold the secret for want of which the world is living in the shadows, and for want of which life for most goes on songless and unsanctified. We have a way of preaching true things as if they were false and secondary things as though they constituted the heart of the Christian faith. We drone out services as if they were but tasks that must be got through. The Churches set vital things in an atmosphere of unreality, and lay enormous stress on what is comparatively unimportant.

I am afraid that we baffle the poor man in the street, because having no theological background to his life, he cannot understand this complicated business of Christian Institutionalism with its formalities and technical language so removed from his own everyday speech. How I blush for the incomprehensibility of much that is contained even in the Deposited Prayer Book.

Now we can mete out blame if we like, and no doubt men are blameworthy in that they will not search in our unattractive ecclesiastical field for the treasure that undoubtedly lies hidden below the surface. But think of the churches and chapels that

we know intimately, and they say which of them gives to an ordinary wayfarer, even to one who is seeking for a Saviour, any encouragement to persevere, and any impression that here for the seeking is the satisfaction of his soul's hunger? Which of them conveys to ordinary people the sense of a living fellowship one with another in Christ and of vital human concern for their neighbours' welfare? I am afraid there is often more real fellowship in the public-house than in the Christian Church.

And again, though the man in the street finds it hard to be articulate in matters of religion, does he not sometimes stammer out the confession that he cannot find in his Church the values that were in Christ Jesus? He does not find his Church attempting corporately to express His mind. Its judgments do not seem to differ from those of the ordinary political institutions with which he is familiar; its love of status and prestige—and who loves these things more than churchwardens and church-workers?—does not seem to be less than that of other corporations that are known to him.

"The gravamen of the charge against the

Church," writes Dr. Jacks, "is not so much that there are certain definite abuses in its corporate life as that there is a general atmosphere of acquiescence in all that is worldly and conventional. No one knows exactly what ideal of life the Church stands for, unless it is that of a kindly and good-natured toleration of things as they are, with a mild desire that they may grow better in time, so far as that is compatible with the maintenance of existing vested interests."

The man in the street finds his Church too supremely sensitive to position and finance; indeed, it is possible that the only thing that would rally the Church of England almost as one man would be an attack on its Establishment and its Endowments.

In idle moments I have wondered whether it would be possible to persuade old gentlemen who haunt West End clubs to march gallantly in procession—four by four—through the streets of Mayfair, and I have come to the conclusion that there are only two causes that might compel them to take part in a proceeding so conspicuous and ungentlemanly. One, of course, would be their protest against a Measure of Prohibition; and the

other, I think, would be for the defence of "our dear old Church" against any political attack on its Establishment and Endowments. I once heard Mr. Ernest Bevin say that for a great number of people their Church was an appendix to their politics. Is that wholly untrue?

The most successful demonstration that was made by the Church of England in recent years was its admirably organised protest against the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church. It is pathetic to think of the enthusiasm which was then aroused, and to compare it with the feeble response that would ensue were the Churches to summon their members to protest, for instance, against war or some social wrong.

The ordinary man is no fool. He sees values considerably less than Christian generally accepted by the Churches; he cannot discover Jesus Christ at their centre or at their heart; and however much he himself may be morally fearful of following Christ, he is strangely disappointed and perplexed. It seems to him as if the Spirit and Soul of Christ had been expelled from what is called His Body; and while this is not wholly true,

it is sufficiently true to determine his indifference.

I do not say that the average man would join Institutional Religion if he saw it scorning convention and living the sacrificial life that its Founder lived, but I do say that he would at least respect it, and later when he had acquired more moral courage he might give it his whole-hearted allegiance and support.

And another thing puzzles. Men rightly believe that Christ came to offer mankind full, happy and care-free life—" an overflowing vitality "—they cannot understand all this heavy-handed business and this lack of natural joy that seems to them to be attached to the profession of Christianity. Somehow the Christian Churches have not let men know that while the cross is essential for a disciple it is a cross that, once accepted and embraced, ennobles and creates; not a cross that restricts, cramps and represses. Jesus Christ never degraded earth to a vale of tears and never suggested that His disciples—not even the prodigals—should renounce their joy in living.

" Nowhere else," writes Professor Jacks,

" is the genius of the Christian more poignantly revealed than in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which begins in the minor key and gradually rises to the major, until it culminates in a great merry-making, to the surprise of the elder son, who thinks the majesty of the moral law will be compromised by the music and the dancing, and has to be reminded that these joyous sounds are the keynotes of the spiritual world."

I want the prevailing oppression of religion removed, and the liberating freedom of Christ's religion with its summons to the fullest possible human life emphasised for all it is worth. Men cannot and ought not to be expected to surrender themselves to the whims and fancies of a joyless God who desires to remove every vivid interest from their lives and to involve them in a dull, uninteresting attitude towards this world's joys and enterprises. Religion is not part of the repressive apparatus of society. Jesus Christ does not want to break men in, but to assist them to break out.

How much one longs to see the Spirit of Christ breathing through the Churches, cleansing them of their atmosphere of stuffi-

ness and repression, and even of much of their official piety. How much one longs for men to know that Christ loves the passionate and the adventurous, and that there is room and need within Christianity for enthusiasm as well as for joy and laughter. I delight in the old legend that tells of the angel who was expelled from Heaven, and who, on being asked what he most missed now that he had fallen from his high estate, answered, "The sound of the trumpets in the morning."

And is not the man in the street asking whether the Church is intellectually honest? He has no means of answering his own question accurately, for he himself is terribly "misty-minded" on matters that concern the Faith; but he has grown suspicious, and not without reason. The knowledge of the scholars only reaches the market-place fifty years after it has been proclaimed in the class-room, but everywhere to-day men and women are capable of realising that the only Institution that will not revise or re-state itself in the light of modern knowledge is the Christian Church. It seems perilous in the extreme to suggest that religion alone among vital human concerns cannot re-phrase itself

in new ways of thought. We need not set much store by those who say that the Churches must move with the times, for all depends in what direction the times are moving; but we cannot forget that it is a long time since the Church consented to think through its message afresh, and that there have been vast acquisitions of new knowledge since it did so. Stability and stagnation mean vastly different things. We need to remember that a great deal of what we hold officially has been built upon fancies and philosophies which were often the outcome of the crudest ideas concerning God and the world.

Why, say men, should they be asked to affirm truths which the best minds of to-day know to be unproven or else scientifically false or inadequate? They yield to none in their respect for the Person of Jesus Christ, but they cannot pledge themselves to the translations of Him which they are bidden to accept under pain of their clergyman's displeasure. Men and women are full of questions, and the ecclesiastical method of assuming that they were all settled finally many years ago fills them, and rightly fills them, with impatience and distrust. What does

not hold the mind will soon lose its hold on the heart.

And here let me say one word on the question of the shortage of ordination candidates. I have a letter before me from an able Bishop who writes to beg me to say nothing that would hinder any man from coming forward for ordination. The Bishop is terribly disturbed at the paucity of those who are contemplating being ordained. In my answer, I might have reminded him that if a profession were worth while there was no need for anxiety as to whether men would come forward to staff it. It is not customary to send speakers to the Public Schools begging youth to consider the claims of the Navy, Army, Business or Law. Why should there be need for the Church to plead with youth that later it should consider the Ministry? Why should Bishops dash anxiously around from school to school pleading for ordination candidates? All this I forbore to say, but I did respectfully point out that if I had my life again, while I should still come forward asking to be allowed to be a minister of the Gospel, I should refuse to be ordained unless it were possible for me to be ordained into One

Universal Church—that is, to be permitted to minister according to the rites and ceremonies of each denomination in every single Church to which I was accredited, or in which I was invited to minister.

Frankly, I am no longer interested in denominational ordination, and I do not want my younger brothers to be. The most enthusiastic denominationalist would not, I imagine, dare to suggest that his Church was holier than others, and yet the attainment of a higher state of holiness would be the only possible justification for denominationalism. I believe that there are hundreds who would gladly come forward to be ordained if—having seen how superbly relevant the Christian Institution is for the salvation of the world, and being eased from giving adherence to what does violence to their intelligence *—they were permitted by ordination

* "A clergyman is expected to believe, or at least to profess, a variety of opinions relating to strictly scientific facts, which all educated men know to be absurd, and it is supposed by many that we cannot be Christians unless we believe them. This is to put a stumbling block in the way of faith. . . ."

"Personally, I am not afraid that honest thinking will ever lead us away from Christianity, but some traditional beliefs will have to go."—DEAN INGE.

to be the servants of One Universal Church, and allowed and encouraged to administer the Sacraments and to preach the Gospel in the manifold ways in which it might be commended to mankind. How can men desire nowadays to be purveyors of sectional religion?

As I approach the constructive proposals that I have to offer, let me confess again that I believe the Anglican Communion has a vast opportunity, perhaps for the last time, of making an outstanding contribution to the welfare of organic Christianity. I have little hope of the Roman Communion acting with large-minded charity, but I believe that the time is ripe for vast sacrifice by the Church to which I belong and that there are multitudes within it who would gladly make that sacrifice for the peace and strengthening of Christendom if the urgent need were placed before them by Authority, and if they could be shown a vision of what might be. I am well aware that what I propose will be strenuously objected to by many, and probably at the moment by an overwhelming majority of Church people, but this does not deter me from at

least suggesting what I believe to be according to the mind of Christ for this generation of would-be disciples.

I want the Anglican Communion to take the great opportunity, which will lie before it at the next Lambeth Conference, of suggesting a greater Christianity, and I believe that if the leaders of Anglicanism would then forget the interests of their own denomination and think of the good of Christendom as a whole, they could do things which would redound in history and would bring the Great Church for which the world waits within the horizon of those who long to welcome its arrival. Ecclesiastical pessimists need to overcome their tendency to think of things as being too good to be true, and to think of them instead as too good not to be true. Man is "the heir of hopes too fair to turn out false."

My longing is that the Lambeth Conference of 1930 will give an outline of a new and fresher edition of Christianity by definitely pleading with the members of its own Communion to dissociate their Church from a multitude of traditional and accepted values which do not really belong to the Christian

faith, and by stretching out the hand of fellowship to all who desire the way of Love and Fellowship to prevail.

I want that Conference to suggest that certain Anglican privileges should be definitely cast aside since they breed a spirit of exclusiveness which is not Christ-like, and hinder rather than assist the general welfare and witness of religion. I want the Anglican Communion advised by its leaders to forswear ruthlessly, without regret and not in the hope of any *quid pro quo,* those things which divide the Body of Christ, do violence to the Spirit of Fellowship and separate one Christian from another. I want the leaders of Anglicanism at least to suggest how by sacrifice the Spirit of Christ can be released so that men may see that He and He alone, and the love of Christ and the wise charity of God, are all that an Institution needs if it would make its Master loved and followed by men. I want my Church to emerge after the Lambeth Conference as, at least potentially, having nothing and yet possessing all things in virtue of the fact that it is ready and glad to cast aside those spiritual and material weights which now so sorely oppress it.

I recognise that the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference are binding upon no man, and I would give every single parish church the right to express its views as to whether it was in sympathy with what its leaders propose. This in itself would raise the issue that I sincerely desire should be raised, and show what support is forthcoming for a fresher, larger edition of Christianity. I expect confusion for a time, and indeed I want it, for I do not believe that the Holy Spirit of God can revitalise Institutional Religion without alarms and excursions and a time of grave disturbance. "Jesus," says Mr. Middleton Murry, "preached anarchy, but an anarchy such that after a momentary chaos a new and more splendid, a new and ineffable condition must begin."

Do I think my proposals will be listened to? No, I do not, and yet I hold that at least the spirit of what I write is essential if Christendom is to pull its weight and pull it together, and assist in saving the soul of the world. If proposals of the kind I suggest do not come from above, as I pray that they may, then ultimately they must come from below; but I sincerely hope that the Anglican

Church may make its sacrifice at the instigation of those who are called to lead it.

I maintain that nothing should be done, at the moment, that would embarrass the leaders of the Anglican Communion, but only that they should be besought by any who may agree with what is here suggested to prepare for radical and courageous action when the Lambeth Conference next meets.

The Anglican Communion in virtue of its intellectual position and its many privileges has vast gifts to make, and it is up to it—whatever other Churches may do or think—to make its gift without delay and leave the result, as well it may, in the hands of God.

The instinct of the Christian heart is surely to desire to be excluded from every privilege which is not granted to others. The whole life of Christ was based, not on sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice, but on sacrifice for His Father's sake and for the sake of the world.

No Church that is not stamped with sacrifice can do Christian business to-day, and it should not be beyond the wit of the Anglican leaders to discover what sacrifice their Church should now make. Let men leave the Church of England, as by law established, if

by a sacrifice of its status and prestige they think less highly of it. Let that type of churchman who looks upon the Free Churches as not quite so genteel as the Church of England go out into the wilderness and re-learn what Christianity means. Let the Church of Rome win its temporary victories by chaos within the Anglican Communion; but once let sacrifice be made by the Anglican Communion and even if it lose its very life, its soul will be its own, and who knows if one day God might not choose to resurrect it for some great purpose? I can see no more hopeful way of remoulding Institutional Religion nearer to the heart of Christ than by a willing and glad sacrifice on the part of Anglicanism in the interests of the Great Church that is yet to be.

Not until there is a Church like some great cathedral in which there are a multitude of side-chapels where the one God is worshipped in different ways by differently minded people, and yet all are within the One Church, is there any hope of Christianity prevailing. Not until the values of Christ and the Spirit of Christ are accepted by Christian people as the one unifying centre around

which all loyalties are grouped can we talk of offering our world the Christian religion. If the spiritual eyes of my Communion were once opened, I fancy it might make a great offering to this ideal.

I am tired to death of all this tinkering at domestic machinery, the reform of the Prayer Book, the multiplication of the Episcopate, and these countless Committees and Committeemen who are over busy in making their own Church more effective. Efficiency cannot coerce the Holy Ghost, nor can a National Assembly based on Parliamentary methods.

I am confident that if the Lambeth Conference would refuse to be distracted by domestic problems and would dare to put out a document embodying large ideals such as I shall propose in the next chapter, the world would recognise the promise of a new sincerity; and that almost every Christian Church that was not, at the moment, in full communion with the Anglican Church would gladly join with it through a new unity, not of compromise but of sacrifice, in working for the renewal of Christianity. So I think even in our day we might see the coming of the Great Church.

Obviously it is futile for a man like myself to suggest the exact words in which the wisdom of Lambeth on such matters as I have mentioned should be expressed. I have set out my ideas merely as the suggestions of one man, who lacks scholarship and has little except some practical experience of ordinary parochial life to commend him and his views —I can do no more. Thinking through the list of those who will be called upon to advise the Anglican Church when the Conference meets at Lambeth in 1930, it would be unfaithful to the last degree to suppose that men so gifted should be incapable, if they were willing, of framing Resolutions of such a nature as I have tentatively suggested. I believe that with courage they could assist at the recovery of organised Christianity which is so sorely overdue and at that re-editing and republication of the Christian Religion to Christendom itself, for which this book is a humble though passionate plea.

The stage is set for great action—will the actors be forthcoming?

CHAPTER X

IN THREE YEARS' TIME

I MUST now ventilate constructive suggestions and resolutions, the sense of which I dare to hope may commend itself to the next Lambeth Conference. I need hardly say that I am not interested in my own wording of the resolutions, but only in what it attempts to express.

I believe, as has already been said, that it might be possible for the leaders of Anglicanism to make pronouncements in 1930 and to suggest action which could revitalise Christianity and enable a large part of Christendom to pull its weight and to pull it together.

I write in the passionate belief that nothing short of fundamental change in the structure and spirit of the Churches will enable Christianity to prevail, and I am convinced that it is the part of the Anglican Communion, and especially of that branch of it which is established in England, in virtue of its manifold possessions and privileges to lead the way. I

am convinced besides that the principles of Christ must now be accepted and lived out, or else that this civilisation must go down into the dust within the space of the next fifty years.

At the moment, we are frequently summoned to conferences to consider how Christianity may be made to appeal more effectively to those who are outside the Churches. We talk a great deal, and yet there are few results. What is really the matter is that we are endeavouring to make the old order work and will not recognise that the old order itself needs radical amendment. I believe that if we would sincerely trust the Holy Spirit of God, we could so change that order that it became not so much a departure as an extension of what is old—a finer and nobler edition of the original Christian faith once delivered to the Saints.

What agitates me, however, is the question whether the leaders of Anglicanism have any conception of the parlous condition of organised Christianity to-day, and have the courage to reconsider the vital question of the presentation of Christianity in the light of the mind of Christ and the world's appalling

need. Can those who will compose the next Lambeth Conference begin now to prepare themselves for 1930, so that when that year dawns they will have determined to dismiss from their purview all questions of mere domestic concern, and enter the Conference with nothing but the yearning desire to make every conceivable sacrifice in order that the Great Church, for which the world waits, can come at least within the horizon of man's vision?

I am not asking for sacrifice for mere sacrifice's sake, but because I am convinced that only by sacrifice and simplification can Christ be made known to this generation.

Once more I would make it perfectly clear that the counsel which I respectfully suggest to Authority is not to be thought of as a counsel of despair, but of great and glorious hope and promise.

The last Lambeth Conference very nearly achieved greatness. It met in an atmosphere which at that time was progressive, and there is no doubt whatsoever that the Bishops were sincerely desirous of bringing the Churches together and suggesting a wider charity. A little more vision and a little more courage might have accomplished what was in their

hearts. Indeed, as it was, they got as far as suggesting the outlines of a greater unity but, having sketched it and held it up before all men of goodwill as wholly desirable, they then made it impossible of achievement by laying down the necessity of re-ordination for men whose work they themselves admitted had been evidently blessed by God. The Bishops did their best—all honour to them for that; and yet their best was nothing like good enough. They did their best: that is at once both praise and censure.

As things are now, there is little likelihood, I fear, of the next Lambeth Conference meeting in the same atmosphere of progressive thought, for since the spacious days of 1920, there has been a reaction of Church and State towards conservatism. Many Bishops, who immediately after the last Lambeth Conference forbade us to criticise what they had resolved, under the plea that if we had been at Lambeth with them we should have known that they were guided by God, have since gone back from those decisions which they were at pains to say were given to them by the leading of the Holy Spirit. A breath of opposition at a Diocesan Conference, or still

more a leading article in a Church paper and, hey presto, Resolutions of such vital importance and spiritual significance are permanently shelved!

There will need to be a vast uprising of new enthusiasm for religious reality and sincerity within my own Church, as indeed within every other Church, if the Anglican Conference is to effect what is really worth while when it next meets.

And now let me put forward constructive proposals and resolutions.

I suggest that the Lambeth Conference, following the precedent of the last, should issue an Encyclical Letter, and follow it up with a number of Resolutions which would make the spirit of that Letter effective and practical.

In the Letter itself, certain things should be said some of which may seem in the nature of platitudes to instructed Church people, but which as a matter of fact are not known or recognised by the vast majority, whose ideas about the Church are, to say the least of it, confused.

The Lambeth Conference should declare

authoritatively that Christianity primarily has nothing to do either with intellectualism or with social activity *per se,* but that it is a commitment to a certain kind of life, and to the standards and values of Jesus Christ. And it should explain that in accepting Christianity, men are pledged to nothing save that they should try to live their lives so that Jesus Christ might approve them, and should accept His values about God.

I should wish it further said that it is the duty of all men to serve God with their mind, in order that they may express the faith that is in them; but that that faith is capable of an infinity of expressions which make impossible and undesirable a dragooned unity of intellectual apprehension, ecclesiastical practice or spiritual worship. I think that it should be definitely admitted that those who are living the life will know the doctrine, and that Authority has no desire to impose traditional orthodoxy either as a necessity for admission into the Christian Church or as essential for salvation. Happy are those whom free thought leads to the acceptance of what has hitherto been received, but let it be remem-

bered that the wide charity of the Father of Jesus Christ makes demands on the life rather than upon the intellect.

I would wish the Lambeth Conference besides to announce the subsidiary if essential importance of the Christian Institution; and to declare that while it believes men should carefully consider the claims of the Christian Church, not only for their own but for its sake, yet there are multitudes of people outside the Institution whose Christianity is not to be questioned.

I would beg the Conference too to confess its dismay that at the moment there is not One Church in which there are a multitude of different expressions of the one Christian faith, but only a number of mutually isolated Churches, each but partially expressing the religion of Jesus Christ.

I should desire Authority to summon all Christian people to pray that the Lord God would burn into their hearts the intolerable sin and scandal of the present situation, compelling them to recognise how natural it is for men to contract out of Christianity owing to the divergent appeals, which the Churches officially deplore but by their practice en-

courage. *And here let Authority confess that it is impossible and sinful to believe that this state of things cannot be altered within the life-time of this generation.*

I would ask the Anglican leaders to admit that they are ready to risk the very life of their Communion rather than have any hand in continuing a state of things which not only cannot be thought of as according to the mind of the Founder of Christianity, but which makes it impossible for the Gospel to be welcomed and recognised by mankind.

I should wish the Encyclical Letter to state that no Church can think of itself as Christian if it is standing for values or making judgments which are alien to the mind and wide charity of Christ. Perhaps the gravest of all charges with which the Anglican Communion must frankly confront itself is that of falsifying our Lord's values of God, in so far as it suggests the possibility of an enduring hell, which is a direct negation of the Love of God as proclaimed by Jesus Christ. While God's righteousness must not be sacrificed to His Love, it is too plain to need proof that the official God of even the Deposited Prayer Book is often capricious, unlovely, unlovable

and less perfect in righteousness and justice than the ideal father of human conception and therefore immeasurably less than the Father-God of Jesus Christ.

My Church must also acknowledge that it is not accepting our Lord's implied doctrine of the brotherhood of man in so far as it is acquiescent in a competitive ideal of human life, which entails that the weak must go to the wall for the benefit of the strong, and in so far as it is failing to outlaw war by demanding complete moral and material disarmament and calling upon its members to refuse to kill their brother men.

It must also be confessed that a true Church of Christ cannot be involved in the use of methods such as magic, fear or superstition which its Lord Himself rejected in His summons to all free men and women to enter into His Kingdom of God. The Lambeth Conference should state that there is nothing magical in the sacraments of the Church, and nothing magical in its ministry; but that the undoubted benefits of the Church depend upon the attitude of those who approach them in reverence and faith.

It should be acknowledged that the Chris-

tian Society is within the world for the salvation of all men, and that the attitude of God towards them is that of the Father in the story of the Prodigal Son. A Church which desires to extend the work of Jesus Christ must be willing, as is its Lord, to accept without question or condition all who in reverence seek admission. It is not possible that a Christian Society which is attempting to live according to the values of the Founder of Christianity should have anything to do with the imposition of intellectual tests or with moral judgments upon men—made on necessarily imperfect knowledge—or with their excommunication.

Finally let the Lambeth Conference determine to cast down forthwith every barrier which separates other Christian Churches from full communion with itself, and open its own doors to all who desire to enter, accepting Jesus Christ as their ideal and the Lord of all good life.

To issue an Encyclical Letter of this nature would ask a great deal from the Anglican Communion, and more than can be expected unless its leaders are frankly willing to confess without recrimination that their Church

has grievously sinned in permitting matters which are unessential to get into its very soul and to complicate to a perfectly paralysing extent the simple, straightforward Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What I propose does not involve the sacrifice of vital things in order to obtain a nebulous unity and a foolish simplification, but it does mean that there could be from 1930, onwards—for I am certain the world would rise to this leading from the Lambeth Conference —One Great Church, rejoicing in the varied expressions of the one faith within its wide unity, and confronting the world with the accumulated power of a vast host of professing Christians who had ceased to be interested in inconclusive disputation and were essentially at one in their love for their Lord and in warfare against the powers of darkness.

One thing at least is evident, only by great sacrifice on the part of every Church can this dream be realised. If I plead for this sacrifice to be made by my own Communion, I plead also with other Communions that they may be equally willing for sacrifice.

I fancy that the times are really ripe for a rebirth of the Christian faith. It will not be

reborn through our existing partial presentations of Christianity, but it could be reborn, I am convinced, if the world saw that each Church was ashamed of those of its values which were unchristian, of its spirit of exclusiveness, of its lack of breadth and vision, and of its appalling and paralysing indifference to the great Love of God.

I want the Anglican Communion to go straight for sacrifice, fearless of opposition. I want it to refuse to be diverted from its course by the opposition of those who look on the Church of Christ as, primarily, a bulwark against revolution and an aid to the preservation of all that now is. I want my Church to be careless of the anger of the Press; to be tender indeed to the old-fashioned, and yet relentless in striving for an enlargement of the appeal of its Master. I want it to show all thoughtful men, who have long since ceased to expect the Christian Church to do anything except grind out its quiet old-fashioned music, that it can astonish the world, not by being bitter towards it, nor by denouncing it—for after all the sin of the world is still the sin of the Church—but by showing that it will no longer tolerate values within its own Body

that are less than the values of Christ, and that it is still capable of breaking its shackles and leading the world onward towards a nobler civilisation which shall be built, not on force and fear but on culture and co-operation.

Let me now submit a draft of the Resolutions which I hope would follow the Encyclical Letter. If such Resolutions as these could be commended to and accepted by the members of the Anglican Communion, I believe the recovery of vital Christianity would begin:

I.—That the Anglican Communion feels the necessity of asserting that the one fundamental demand which Christianity makes on the individual is that he should accept the values of God which Jesus Christ revealed and endeavour to follow the example of our Lord in incorruptness of living.

II.—That the Anglican Communion believes it essential that all men should think out their Christianity for themselves and not merely

accept it on authority: and that Christianity presupposes that its truths can only be apprehended by those who are living true to their own highest ideals and are facing their doubts in all honesty.

III.—That the Anglican Communion, while believing that the Christian Church is essential for the welfare of the Christian faith, yet recognises that it exists for the service of mankind and is not indispensable for Christian discipleship. At the same time it believes that men and women will be the more strengthened and the cause of Christianity better served if they are sincerely able to give their allegiance to the Christian society.

IV.—That the Anglican Communion does not believe that a Christian Church has any right to insist upon intellectual tests for would-be disciples.

V.—That the Anglican Communion believes that, according to the mind

of Christ, His Church should be within the world for the salvation of all men. It believes that the attitude of God towards men is that of the father in the story of the Prodigal Son, and that consequently the Christian Church should be ready at any moment, without question or condition, to welcome into its communion all who reverently ask that they may be admitted. It cannot deny the full hospitality of God to any seeker after Him: and it renounces all desire to make moral judgment upon men or to excommunicate or anathematise any single person whatever may have been his shortcomings.

VI.—That the earnest prayer and desire of the Anglican Communion is that it may be allowed, through sacrifice, to assist in outlining to all men a larger edition of Christianity in which all may be literally at one in their common loyalty to Jesus Christ, their fel-

lowship one with another and their common belief that such loyalty and fellowship transcend all differences of interpretation and administration.

VII.—That the Anglican Communion confesses that men must be won to the cause of Christ by no other methods than by the revelation of God's Love, and that they are not to be importuned into the Christian Society by methods of magic, fear or superstition which Christ Himself refused. It definitely asserts that there is no magic attached to its sacraments or ministry, but that their undoubted benefits are dependent on the attitude of those who reverently seek them.

VIII.—That the Anglican Communion conceives that its duty is to be a witness in the world to the actual values of Jesus Christ which are plainly to be seen in the Sermon on the Mount. Only by the acceptance of these values on the

part of individuals can the remedy be found for the distractions of the world. There is no other panacea. The Anglican Communion will no longer acquiesce in the belief that literal Christianity is impossible and unpractical.

IX.—That the Anglican Communion denies that the brotherhood of all men—irrespective of their class or nationality or race—can be reconciled with any competitive ideal of human life which necessitates that the weak must go to the wall for the benefit of the strong or that requires men to slay their brother men. It is obliged to outlaw all war and to demand from its members that they should refuse to kill their brethren.

X.—That the Anglican Communion feels it essential that the presentation of Christianity should be enlarged by radical simplification, and that much that is com-

plicated and now misunderstood should be rephrased or restated.

XI.—The Anglican Communion resolves that its teaching and official literature should be purged forthwith of any suggestions that ascribe to God a desire for vengeance or a willingness to punish eternally those who have strayed from the Father's home. Any suggestion that the Christian God is cruel or capricious in His judgments, unjust in His punishments, or less wholly lovable than a perfect father of human conception must be removed both from the teaching of the Church and from its prayer book. In particular the teaching of Jesus Christ about God cannot be reconciled with the current conception of Hell.

XII.—That the Anglican Communion confesses with shame its share of blame for the fact that the Christian Church has been split into a multitude of isolated sects, and it

recognises that men cannot be expected to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ while it is presented in sectional forms.

XIII.—That the Anglican Communion denies that this state of confusion cannot be immediately remedied, but recognises that the remedy is impossible without an infinity of sacrifice on its own part.

XIV.—That the Anglican Communion desires every barrier which separates the adherents of one Church from another to be removed without delay: and especially the barriers that prevent fellow Christians from kneeling together at the Holy Communion.

XV.—That the Anglican Communion is determined no longer to compete with the kingdoms of this world for prestige. It does not believe in national churches in so far as they exalt the interests of the nation above the interests of the universal Kingdom of God, or stimulate national prejudices and

national jealousies. It believes that titles such as "Your Grace" and "My Lord" must be renounced by the leaders of Anglicanism.

XVI.—That the Anglican Communion does not desire for itself any privileges which are denied to other Christian Churches, and as one token of its sincerity in this respect it demands its own disestablishment and if necessary is prepared to accept disendowment. Yet believing it to be essential that Christianity should remain the acknowledged religion it asks the State to permit it, together with such other Christian bodies as are willing to assist, to suggest how the establishment of Christianity could be maintained and made effective.

XVII.—That the Anglican Communion asks the co-operation of other Churches in order that a way may be discovered by which all who in future so desire may be

ordained into One Universal Church with power to minister the Word and Sacraments to any congregation, provided that in exercising such ministry they loyally abide by the rules and practice of that particular branch of the One Universal Church.

XVIII.—That the Anglican Communion while it believes in the expediency of Episcopal government dissociates itself from the belief that the Apostolic succession is the essential test of the validity of a Christian Church. It expects diversity of views on this subject but it cannot believe the doctrine to be sufficiently proven to permit it any longer to retard the reunion of Christendom.

I submit respectfully the Resolutions outlined above to the Bishops who will meet at the next Lambeth Conference, asking them once more to remember that it is not the wording but the sense and the spirit therein expressed that I feel to be essential if the Anglican Communion is to make its full con-

tribution to the recovery of vital Christianity.

I have a further hope that drastic and radical resolutions of this kind may be definitely recommended by the Lambeth Conference to the Anglican Communion and that each church may be asked to discuss them and to send the results of their deliberations to the appointed authority. Thus will be seen how far the Church at large is prepared for radical reform and sacrifice.

What really matters is that between now and 1930 men and women everywhere who profess and call themselves Christians should be encouraged to realise that Christ must be taken seriously, or else that we must confess that His religion is too hard for us. We cannot play at Christianity any longer.

Whatever Anglicanism does, I pray that it may not merely denounce the world; I want it to proclaim its own sense of shame because things are as they are, to pledge itself to nobler endeavour and to influence the world to that end by its own witness of a new life of religious sincerity, simplicity and reality.

I have been out of touch with Church opinion for some considerable time. No doubt my views are prejudiced; no doubt,

like every other unit, I can only see one part of the battle-front, and yet I cannot believe that the spirit of what I have ventured to outline can be thought of as untrue or disloyal to the mind of Christ. I believe too that if my Church dared to go forward along the lines which I have suggested, it would not be long before there was a renewal and revival of vital Christianity.

CHAPTER XI

CAN LAMBETH FACE IT?

THERE are several things that must be said before this book is brought to its conclusion.

It will be recognised that I have been primarily concerned with the contribution which I believe the Anglican Communion, had it vision and courage, could make to the recovery of Christianity. I realise, as was pointed out in Chapter II, that if there is to be any effective leadership to this end when the Lambeth Conference next meets, the Anglican Church will need an exceptionally brave and able leader; and it seems obvious that that leader must fill the See of Canterbury and himself preside at the Conference.

It has fallen to the present Archbishop of Canterbury to guide the Church with outstanding wisdom for many years, but the times have changed, and I believe that the type of leadership which will be needed in the immediate future is of a different kind from that which it has been given in the past.

I am persuaded that the next Archbishop of Canterbury must be a Reformer in the fullest sense of the word, and that he must press upon the Church over which he presides some such charitable policy of sacrifice and enlargement as I ventured to outline in the last chapter.

I could write a great deal about the future of Lambeth as I visualise it. Much as I dislike over-organisation, I believe that Lambeth should be used as the head-quarters of a number of the ablest men in the Anglican Communion who would each be in charge of departments of the Church's great and imperative activities, and who would be working to a policy advocated by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. I know that this suggestion will disturb those Bishops who consider the Archbishop as merely *primus inter pares,* but I am convinced that the time has come when the Anglican Church must have one leader if it is to make its own outstanding contribution, and assuredly no one could lead it so effectively as the Primate of all England.

This means that when the present great Archbishop of Canterbury lays down the reigns of office, his successor will need to display a courage equal to that which the Church

at large has learnt to recognise in its present Archbishop—but that courage will be required for facing different issues. He will also need wisdom and learning as great, and humility as sincere, as that of his predecessor. He must be of an age that will give him power and physical strength to concentrate for years on his policy in the face of the immense opposition which he will encounter both within and without the Church. It may be that the next Archbishop will not live to see the results of his work, but I believe that it would be possible for him at least to suggest the outline and to lay the foundations of the Great Church that is yet to be.

Some years ago, when the present Lord Oxford was Prime Minister and it fell to him to appoint to the See of York, he chose a young and singularly able Bishop for the post, under a belief that the time would soon come when the Establishment and endowments of the Church of England would be seriously challenged. Whatever Lord Oxford's views on the subject were, he felt it right to give the Church fo. its Archbishop of York, not a man who had earned preferment by many years of faithful service, but

one who was comparatively young and outstandingly gifted, who would be a doughty champion of the Church of England if the storm—for most people would consider it a storm—had arisen. To this end he chose Dr. Lang, then the Suffragan Bishop of Stepney, and there were few who doubted the wisdom of his choice.

My hope is that when the present Archbishop of Canterbury feels it right to resign, the Prime Minister of the day, persuaded by church people, will have the courage to nominate a man to fill his place who will be distinguished, not for his statesmanship, nor for his moderating influence, nor for his acceptability to the powers that be, but for those qualities of leadership which I have submitted as being essential if the Anglican Communion is to play its part worthily.

Frankly, I doubt if any Bishop on the present Bench is capable of really leading the Church on to the road of sacrifice. The Church needs a bigger man than any of its present Bishops—it needs a great Reformer. It cannot be denied that the Bench of Bishops is a very close Trade Union, and it seems almost impossible for any man to retain his re-

forming zeal after he has attained to high office. Episcopal gaiters sometimes seem vastly satisfactory for intellectual somersaults. I fear that the voice of the world is to-day saying to the Episcopal Bench what the elder Pitt once said to Newcastle at a time of grave crisis: "Fewer words, my lord, for your words have long lost all weight with me." *

I cannot believe that any of those whose names are now being canvassed as likely successors to the present Archbishop would be capable of taking any risks with the Anglican Communion, or of recommending any radical reform in its spirit and structure. I do not believe that anything effective can be done unless the prestige of my Church is endangered.

I sincerely hope then that the Prime Minister who will be called upon next to fill the See of Canterbury will venture to nominate an Archbishop who will realise that Chris-

* I wish it to be clearly understood that I am only referring to the bench of Bishops in their capacity for leading spiritual and ecclesiastical revival. I gratefully acknowledge that in all other respects there is no group of men more gifted or more self-sacrificing; their knowledge of human affairs far surpasses that with which Cabinet Ministers are endowed.

tianity will not and cannot prevail unless the Church over which he presides is willing to make great and signal sacrifice, and to exorcise from its very soul many values which now make it so poor a witness to the wide charity of its Lord. The task of the next Archbishop of Canterbury will be no enviable one. He must needs be an originator, a scholar and, above all things, a man of God; he will also require outstanding courage, and it may be years before he can persuade the prominent people in his own Communion to realise that he is not beside himself.

Am I asking for revolution within the Church? Yes, I suppose so, but for one which is led by the leaders of the Church and especially by him who will preside at the next Lambeth Conference. Am I aware of what would result—of the fury of the Church Press, of the "grave apprehensions" of the several parties within the Church, of the horror of ordinary Church people, of the invasion of Lambeth by mobs of the orthodox? Little enthusiasm from those in high office could be counted on, for it must be remembered that the Boanerges have for the most part been frozen out. Do I realise that there

would be a time of utter chaos? I do, but I think it is essential if the Great Church is to come, and I do not fear the necessary confusion since I believe the Holy Spirit is as available now as He was at Pentecost, and that if He were really allowed to come, He must needs come to disturb.

After all, as was once said in a famous Bampton Lecture, "In every age those who were chiefly interested in the maintenance of things as they are, have seen Christianity not as restful and reassuring, but as dangerous and subversive."

I believe too that the time has come when those—and there are many even in high places—who in their heart of hearts are profoundly disquieted as to the condition of religion must have the courage to say so. They must either suggest some more practical method for the renewal of Christianity or must confess that all that it can do is quietly to continue assisting individuals but making no impact on a world heading for disaster. One thing at least to me seems intolerable, that we should go on confessing in our hearts that things are wrong, but refusing to face the situation. This faithless idea that nothing can be done

now is but the result of allowing our senses to be dulled by the long lethargy of perpetual procrastination and discussion.

Two things I ask. Firstly, that the so called Reformers within my own Church should realise the futility of too much attention to mere domestic reform, and should refuse any longer to salve their conscience from facing the vital issues that confront Christianity by hectic attention to mere domestic affairs which however serviceable have almost nothing to contribute to the salvation of the world. Secondly, I entreat the members of my own Communion to realise that nothing can happen effectively without unstinting sacrifice on the part of Anglicanism. We must give something away and give it gladly.

I well remember once attending a meeting on the Reunion of Christendom. There were two prominent speakers—an eminent Anglican divine and a no less distinguished Free Church minister. The meeting was most enthusiastic, and had the ordinary man in the street, unaccustomed to ecclesiastical subtleties, been present he would have felt certain that nothing separated the Church of England from the Free Churches. Everybody on and

off the platform metaphorically embraced and shook hands—if anything, the heartiness was a little overdone. We were told how calamitous were our divisions and how contrary to the mind of Christ: two admirable speeches were made—but let me tell the sequel. In the speakers' room afterwards, I heard the Anglican divine say that he did not think he had given anything away, and later I heard the Free Church minister telling his friends that he thought he had fully held his ground! There is no progress to be made along these lines, and until there is a generous and glad giving on both sides, little can be expected.

Why should *I* dare to write this book? Well, I have held my hand for many a long year, waiting, hoping, and longing for some leaders of the Anglican Communion, infinitely better equipped than myself, to dare to ventilate the biggest problems and fight for the things that really matter. Many of them have often encouraged me by the things they have said to me in the privacy of their studies, but I have yet to hear them say these things on a public platform. I can see nowhere, on the horizon of my Communion, any single reformer in high office who is prepared to

forget denominational loyalties, or to risk an infinity of Anglican sacrifice for the sake of Christendom at large. Yet I believe if once the summons came from above, it would not be long before the Christian conscience of the Church would be stirred to respond.

I am tired of all these attempts at adjustment and these lengthy statements which are skilfully written by men who should be wearing the lawyer's wig, men with unconsciously juggling minds who hope that this or that statement, being put out as subtly as it is, may not raise the antagonism of this or that important partisan. I do not think the Kingdom of God will come through committees or committee work. I distrust all these clever resolutions which chairmen write while committees wrangle, and which get passed because the hour is late, or because each is able to interpret the resolutions in his own way, believing that he has got what he wants at the expense of the other party.

I sincerely pray that reform may come from above and not proceed in an unauthorised manner from below—but come it must. This book is in the nature of a challenge. I have spoken because no one else appears willing

to speak, at least not in terms that seem to me to have any real significance for the future of Christendom. I appeal to members of my own Communion, not of course to accept opinions which are merely mine, but to refrain from casting this book behind them just because it makes some unusual proposals and is written by a man who is thought to be impetuous. If fifteen years of honest thought and grave anxiety at the prospect of committing these opinions to paper bespeak impetuosity, then I must accept the charge. As I have said before, I am in a hurry and I see no reason to be ashamed of it.

I notice, as all men must, the more thoughtful people not, thank God, drawing away from Christianity but drawing away little by little from any vital interest in the Church. And yet, after nearly two thousand years the personality of the Carpenter is held to be the criterion of all that is noble. Goethe said, "Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance."

Christianity is still the answer to the spiritual needs of men and can provide all that the world requires to save it from disaster and to enable mankind to live in peace and harmony. I should not have been at pains to write this book did I not also believe that the Christian Society can yet become the medium through which salvation is offered.

I confess that I do not foresee much hope of a fresh passion for Christian values falling upon my Church unless and until everywhere men and women who belong to it will betake themselves to the task of trying to understand the mind of their Lord. I would have them ask themselves this one question: "In the light of the tragic failure of Institutional Religion to commend the Way of Christ to mankind, can there be in the mind of God an alternative Church to any that now exists; to attain to which it is our duty to bend, if needs be to breaking point, our own denomination, and may not that Church be for the world of this day the rightful and orthodox outcome of the faith once delivered to the Saints?"

One word in conclusion. Dare I say that I hope other Churches, whatever their denomination, may be willing also to meet together

within their own Communion to ask exactly the same question? If only the Churches were not so inflexible!

May I, moreover, express the hope that the Laity will stand by ready to help vigorously, preparing themselves by prayer and thought to recognise any sign of a vital movement towards radical amendment within their Church.

I have a treasured vision which I hardly dare put into words, for fear lest it should be laughed at, and yet I can see it resulting from the next Lambeth Conference if only it would consider nothing but the mind of our Lord. I can see a day set apart the world over wherever Christians meet together, when there might be—after perhaps a week of preparation—great Communion Services in the Free Churches, which could be attended by Anglicans who long to receive that most blessed gift of the Real Presence from their fellow Christians of other denominations. And I see great Communion Services in the Anglican Churches to which Free Churchmen might gladly come. By no one should this Feast of Unity be used as a protest, or even as a pretence that differences of thought were at an

end, but merely as a witness of the oneness of all Christians in Christ Jesus, and of the primary importance of that one immense fact. This would be no end in itself but an earnest of the Churches' fitness to witness to Fellowship and to commend the Gospel to the world.

It is heartbreaking to think that the Church of Rome might be unable to approve, but I fear that day is not yet; but still I plead with all the power at my command that we should not hold back from Christian action because of Rome's displeasure.

I should like to have made suggestions with regard to many problems within my own Church which press for solution, but throughout this book I have been concerned only with the far greater issues that confront Christianity as a whole, beside which problems of mere domestic importance seem to me to be almost negligible.

* * * * *

As I see things, this civilisation will go down into the abyss within a few short years unless the Churches can commend the Way of Christ effectively to the heart and conscience of mankind. This can only be done by a Society in which all Christian people

are at one in the essential things that make for righteousness even while they differ in ways of thought and ecclesiastical administration. If in our day we could do something towards this great ideal, we should not have lived in vain, and even while we might not live to see all that we long to see, yet in the evening of life we might turn towards the East, in the company of all those who love the Lord Christ, and sing the *Nunc Dimittis*.

If we will not strive to this end, then Christ must be crucified afresh, and it will be the lot of some other civilisation to assist at His inevitable Resurrection.

THE END

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